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RENAISSANCE

5 / HYBRID NATURE

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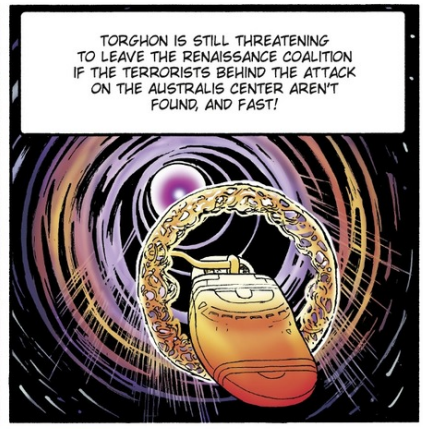
EUROPE COMICS

THE "PRIME QUANTUM LEAP," BROTHERS AND SISTERS! THE FIRST HUMAN EXPEDITION TO ANOTHER GALAXY! IT'S ALL ANYONE'S TALKING ABOUT, AND RENAISSANCE HAS MADE IT A GLOBAL EVENT!
HERE AT RADIO PARIS, WE THINK THAT THE SELECTED CREW SOUNDS A LITTLE TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE! TEN YOUNG PEOPLE, DIVERSE IN BOTH RACE AND GENDER... THE PLANNERS HAVE GOTTA BE HIDING SOMETHING!
IT'S A STRANGE RITUAL ORCHESTRATED TO CELEBRATE 20 YEARS OF OCCUPATION HERE ON EARTH... AND TO PREPARE FUTURE GENERATIONS TO JOIN THE COMPLEX!
BUT WILL WE EVER GET THE RIGHT TO VOTE AND DECIDE FOR OURSELVES?

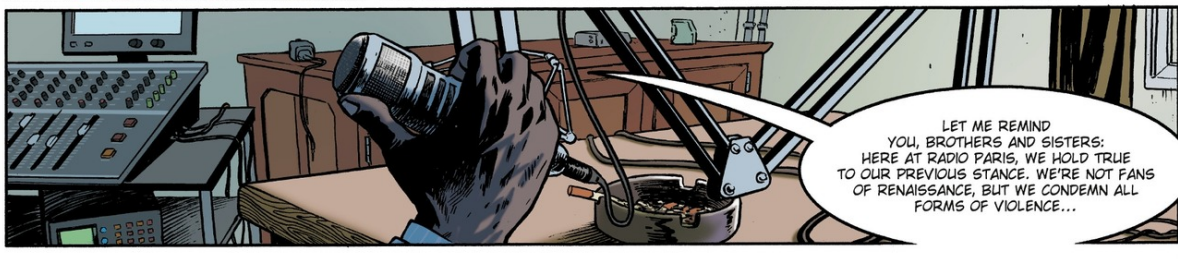
1

WHILE WE WAIT FOR POSTCARDS FROM OUR INTREPID EXPLORERS, HERE'S SOME NEWS ABOUT OUR OWN WORLD!


TORGHON IS STILL THREATENING TO LEAVE THE RENAISSANCE COALITION IF THE TERRORISTS BEHIND THE ATTACK ON THE AUSTRALIS CENTER AREN'T FOUND, AND FAST!

BUT EVEN WITH AN EXTRATERRESTRIAL ARMADA AND ALL OF EARTH'S COPS ON THEIR HEELS, THE SUI JURIS TERRORIST GROUP REMAINS ELUSIVE!

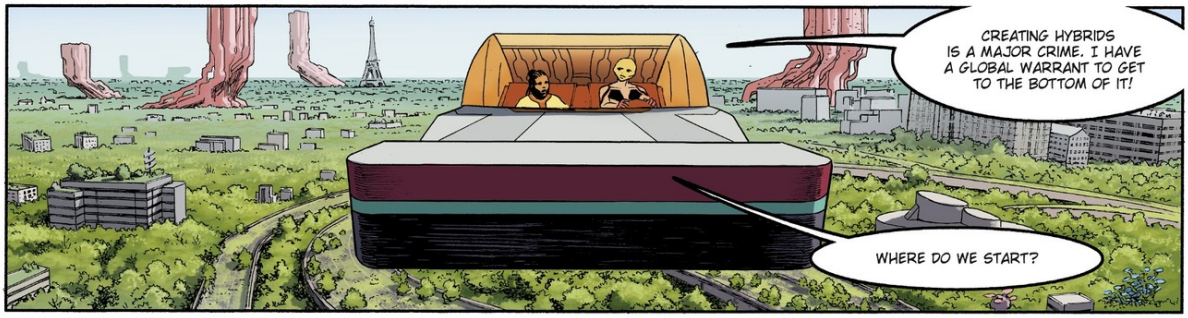
IT'S HARD TO SAY WHERE THESE MISGUIDED SOULS WILL STRIKE NEXT.

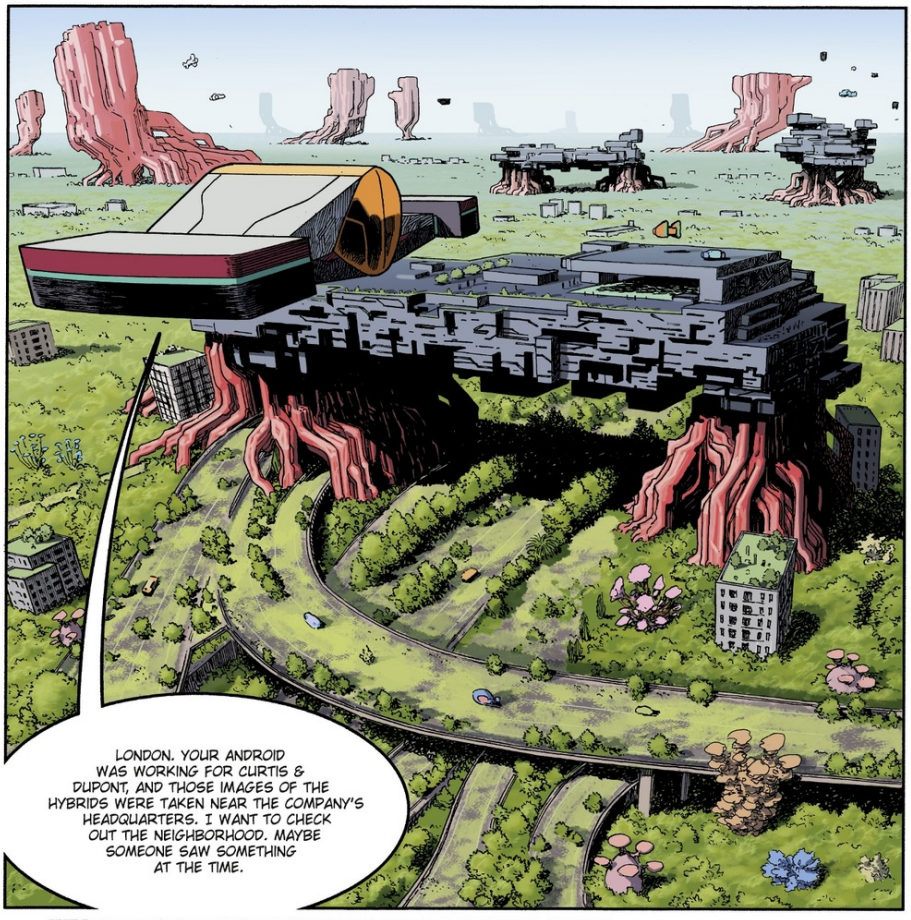

LET ME REMIND YOU, BROTHERS AND SISTERS: HERE AT RADIO PARIS, WE HOLD TRUE TO OUR PREVIOUS STANCE. WE'RE NOT FANS OF RENAISSANCE, BUT WE CONDEMN ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE...

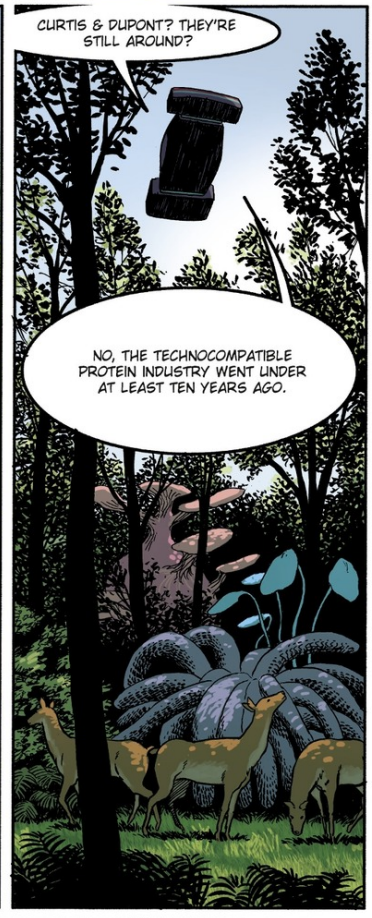
2

I'LL SIGN OFF TODAY BY WISHING THOSE TEN YOUNG ONES SAFE TRAVELS AND OFFERING THEM SOME FOOD FOR THOUGHT: WHY GO SO FAR TO LOOK FOR WHAT'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF US?
THIS IS RADIO PARIS, EARTH'S LAST FREE RADIO STATION. IT'S 7:30, OUR NEXT UPDATE WILL COME AT NOON.
SÄTIE? IT'S HÉLÈNE. IT'S NICE OUT, SO I'M WAITING FOR YOU BY THE RIVER... SEE YOU SOON!
HELLO!
?
I'M YOUR NEIGHBOR, HÉLÈNE. I LIVE IN THE JULES VERNE TOWER. I SEE YOU AROUND A LOT... I SUPPOSE YOU LIVE ALONE...
ARE YOU FLIRTING WITH ME, YOUNG LADY?

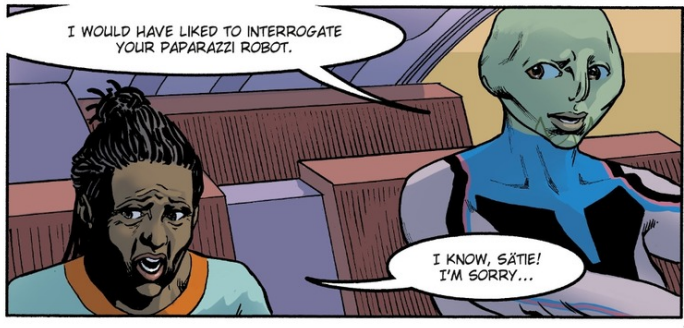
HA HA HA! YOU'RE FUNNY, SIR! I WAS JUST TRYING TO SAY THAT IF YOU EVER NEED ANY HELP... WELL HERE, TAKE MY CONTACT INFO.
WHO KNOWS? MAYBE YOU'LL BE THE ONE TO CALL ME!
HERE'S MINE. BUT DON'T CALL AFTER EIGHT. I GO TO BED EARLY! IF YOU WANT TO GO OUT WITH ME, IT'LL HAVE TO BE AT LUNCHTIME!
THEN THAT'S WHY!
IT'S STRANGE, I FEEL LIKE I KNOW YOUR VOICE...
I RECORDED A FEW ALBUMS WHEN I WAS YOUNGER. DO YOU LIKE OLD SCHOOL RAP, DEAR NEIGHBOR?
I LOVE IT!
ANY WORD FROM SWÄNN?
NONE... HE'S GONE TOTALLY DARK. HIS TRANSMISSIONS CUT OUT. IF HE DOESN'T GET IN TOUCH BY TONIGHT, RENAISSANCE WILL SEND AN ORIGAMA. IN THE MEANTIME, I'M STARTING MY INVESTIGATION...
...INTO THOSE HYBRIDS YOU HEARD ABOUT!

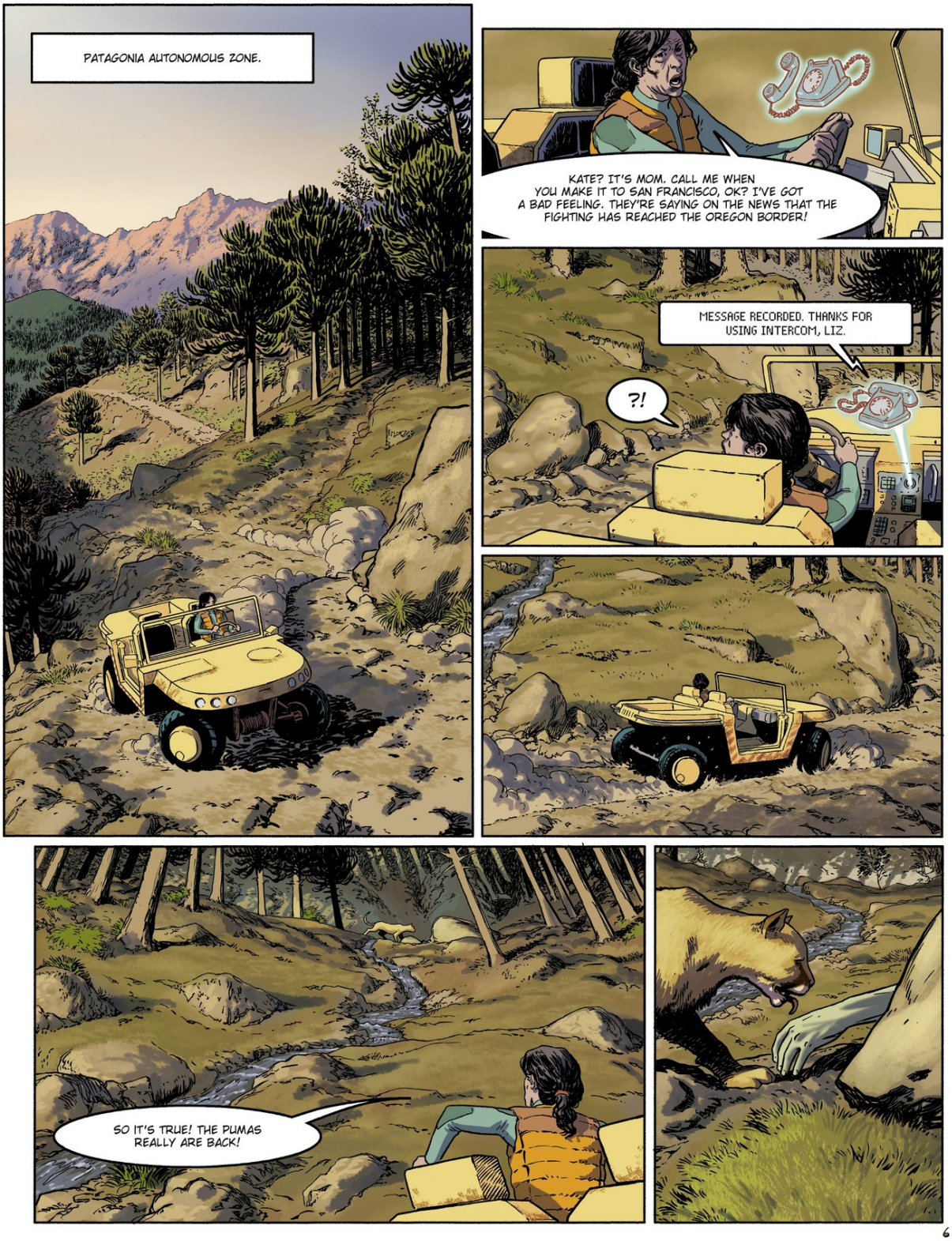

CREATING HYBRIDS IS A MAJOR CRIME. I HAVE A GLOBAL WARRANT TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF IT!
WHERE DO WE START?


LONDON. YOUR ANDROID WAS WORKING FOR CURTIS & DUPONT, AND THOSE IMAGES OF THE HYBRIDS WERE TAKEN NEAR THE COMPANY'S HEADQUARTERS. I WANT TO CHECK OUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD. MAYBE SOMEONE SAW SOMETHING AT THE TIME.


CURTIS & DUPONT? THEY'RE STILL AROUND?
NO, THE TECHNOCOMPATIBLE PROTEIN INDUSTRY WENT UNDER AT LEAST TEN YEARS AGO.

IT'S TRUE THAT EMANCIPATION VIRUSES SOUNDED THE DEATH KNELL FOR BIODROIDS... MY WITNESS TOLD ME HE TRIED TO JOIN A SPARTACUS FACTION... WITHOUT SUCCESS, OBVIOUSLY.


I WOULD HAVE LIKED TO INTERROGATE YOUR PAPARAZZI ROBOT.
I KNOW, SÄTIE! I'M SORRY...


PATAGONIA AUTONOMOUS ZONE.
KATE? IT'S MOM. CALL ME WHEN YOU MAKE IT TO SAN FRANCISCO, OK? I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING. THEY'RE SAYING ON THE NEWS THAT THE FIGHTING HAS REACHED THE OREGON BORDER!
MESSAGE RECORDED. THANKS FOR USING INTERCOM, LIZ.
?!
SO IT'S TRUE! THE PUMAS REALLY ARE BACK!
6

SWÄNN?! HOLY HELL, I FINALLY FOUND YOU!
SWÄNN!!
SWÄNN, WHAT HAPPENED?
J=Z▲ ◆"6= @6J▲

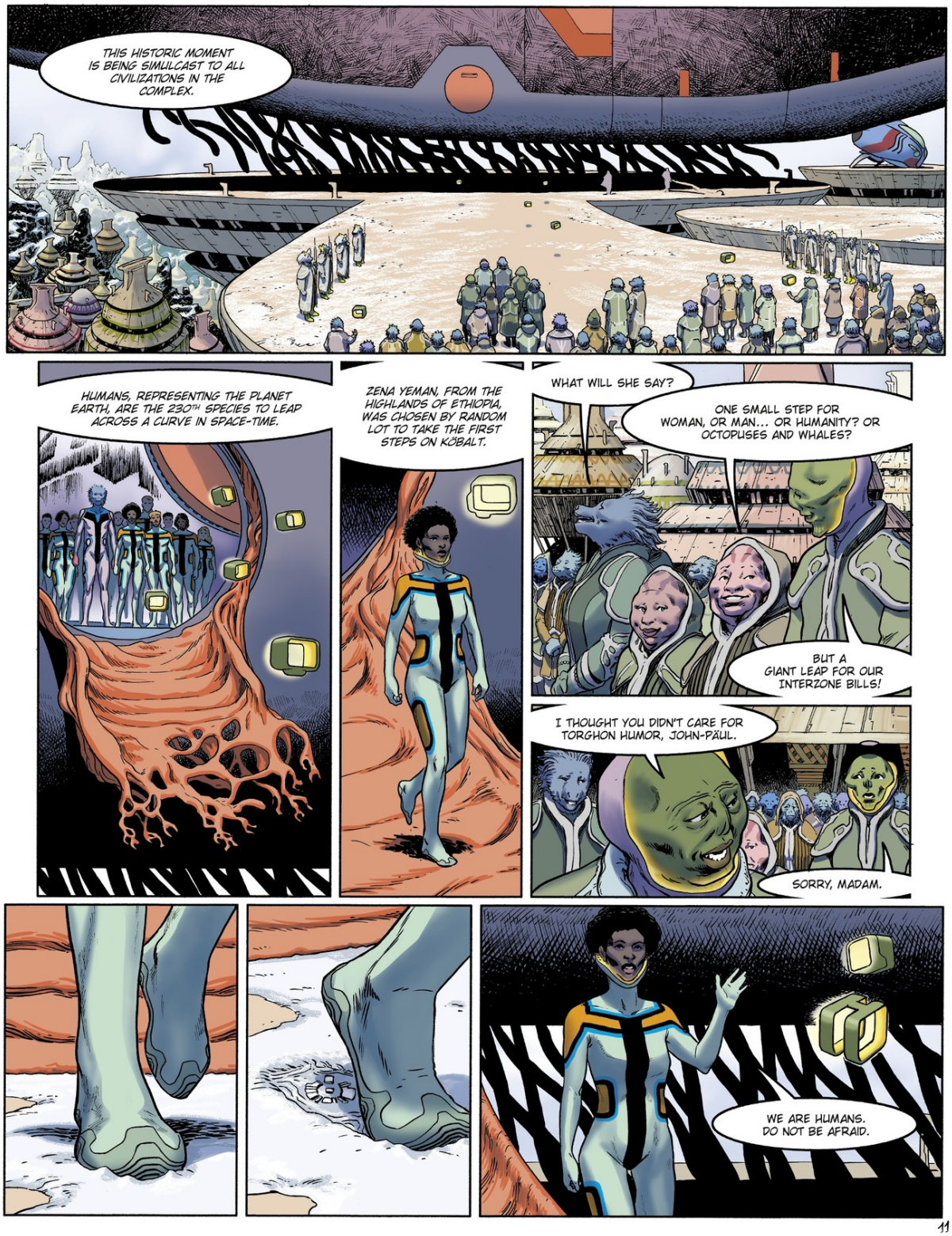
YOUR IMPLANTS HAVE BEEN RIPPED OUT... NO MORE TRANSLATOR, NO MORE COMMUNICATOR, NO MORE HEALTH MONITORING DEVICE... NOT TO MENTION YOUR WOUNDS ARE INFECTED AND YOU HAVE A RAGING FEVER.
I'M GOING TO STICK AN ANTIBIOTIC PATCH ON YOU, OK? DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M SAYING?
?!
EVERYONE, COME IN. I JUST FOUND LIZ HAMILTON'S CAR. EMPTY.
CALL OFF YOUR DOGS, CORTÉS!
MAKE SURE NOBODY FINDS THEIR BODIES!

8

I HAVE VISUAL CONTACT! GATHER AT MY LAST RECORDED POSITION.
AN ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE! THAT CRAZY CORTÉS JUST BLOCKED MY PHONE SIGNAL! WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO NAVIGATE USING THE MOSS ON THE TREE TRUNKS, SWÄNN!
9

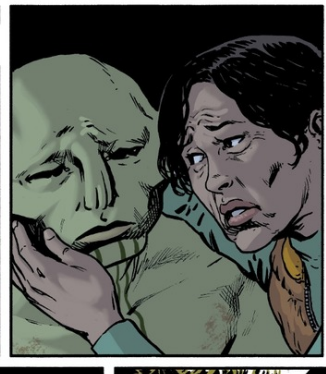
PLANET KÖBALT...
INTERZONE REPORT: NO DAMAGE TO VESSEL, TIME CORRECTION COMPLETE, ENJOY THE REST OF YOUR TRIP.
WELCOME TO THE GLACIERS OF KÖBALT, YOUNG EXPLORERS! OUTSIDE TEMPERATURE: -30 DEGREES CELSIUS.
IN THE NAME OF ALL CIVILIZATIONS IN THE COMPLEX, A RENAISSANCE DELEGATION WILL WELCOME YOU AT THE WATERFOL SPACEPORT.
THE FIRST TERRAN LEAP, AND IT'S UNDER MY SON'S LEADERSHIP. WHAT AN END TO MY DIPLOMATIC CAREER, MY DEAR LISÄ!

10.


THIS HISTORIC MOMENT IS BEING SIMULCAST TO ALL CIVILIZATIONS IN THE COMPLEX.
HUMANS, REPRESENTING THE PLANET EARTH, ARE THE 230TH SPECIES TO LEAP ACROSS A CURVE IN SPACE-TIME.
ZENA YEMAN, FROM THE HIGHLANDS OF ETHIOPIA, WAS CHOSEN BY RANDOM LOT TO TAKE THE FIRST STEPS ON KÖBALT.
WHAT WILL SHE SAY?
ONE SMALL STEP FOR WOMAN, OR MAN... OR HUMANITY? OR OCTOPUSES AND WHALES?
BUT A GIANT LEAP FOR OUR INTERZONE BILLS!
I THOUGHT YOU DIDN'T CARE FOR TORGHON HUMOR, JOHN-PÄUL.
SORRY, MADAM.
WE ARE HUMANS. DO NOT BE AFRAID.

THEY'RE HEADING NORTH, OFF-TRAIL. I'LL KEEP AFTER THEM, JUST FOLLOW MY SIGNAL!
COPY THAT, CORTÉS. WE'RE STILL A HALF HOUR'S RIDE AWAY. WAIT FOR US BEFORE YOU MAKE A MOVE!

I'M SO SORRY.. I DON'T KNOW WHY THEY HURT YOU...



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WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED, CORTÉS?! TALK!
TOADSLIME, THERE... WE WERE JUST GONNA HOLD HIM FOR A FEW DAYS SO HE'D STOP SNOOPING AROUND... JUST A FEW DAYS... BUT THINGS GOT OUT OF HAND UP AT THE *ESTANCIA*.
"OUT OF HAND"? SWÄNN WAS TORTURED, CORTÉS. DID YOU KNOW THAT?
OH, SPARE ME THE MORAL OUTRAGE... I'M GOOD AS DEAD! SHE'LL HAVE ME KILLED!
WHO? WHO TOLD YOU TO KIDNAP SWÄNN?
YOU REALLY DIDN'T SEE THIS COMING?
WHY'S THAT BASTARD POKING AT ME?
HE'S SAVING YOUR LIFE! IT'S IN HIS NATURE.
WHO'S THREATENING YOU, CORTÉS? WHO ARE YOU SO AFRAID OF?
YOUR DAUGHTER... KATE... SHE'S IN CHARGE OF SUI JURIS HERE... SHE'S THE ONE WHO GAVE US THE PARALYZERS TO TAKE OUT YOUR TOAD!
LIAR!

CAN YOU USE CORTÉS'S PHONE TO REACH RENAISSANCE?
YOU'D RATHER WE QUIETLY INVESTIGATE KATE'S CAMP IN THE MOUNTAINS? IT'S OUR BEST CHANCE TO LEARN WHAT SUI JURIS IS UP TO... THEN WE CAN CALL RENAISSANCE TO AIRLIFT US OUT...
THESE MOUNTAIN BIKES CAN BE TEMPERAMENTAL, SO I'M DRIVING, GOT IT?

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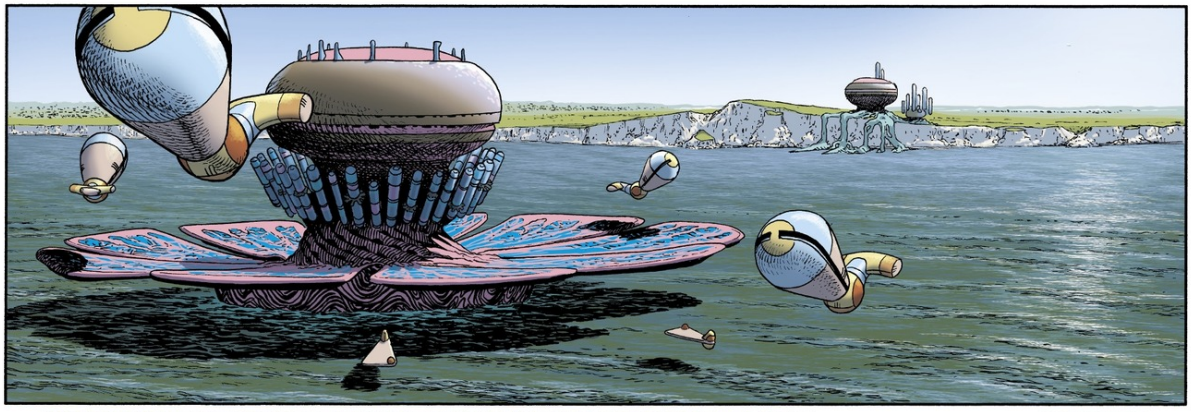
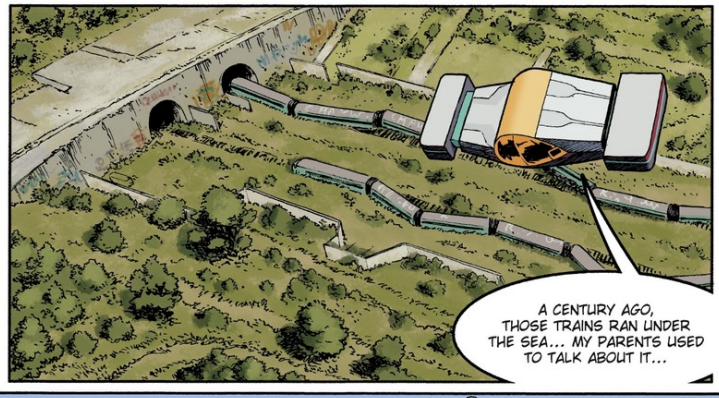
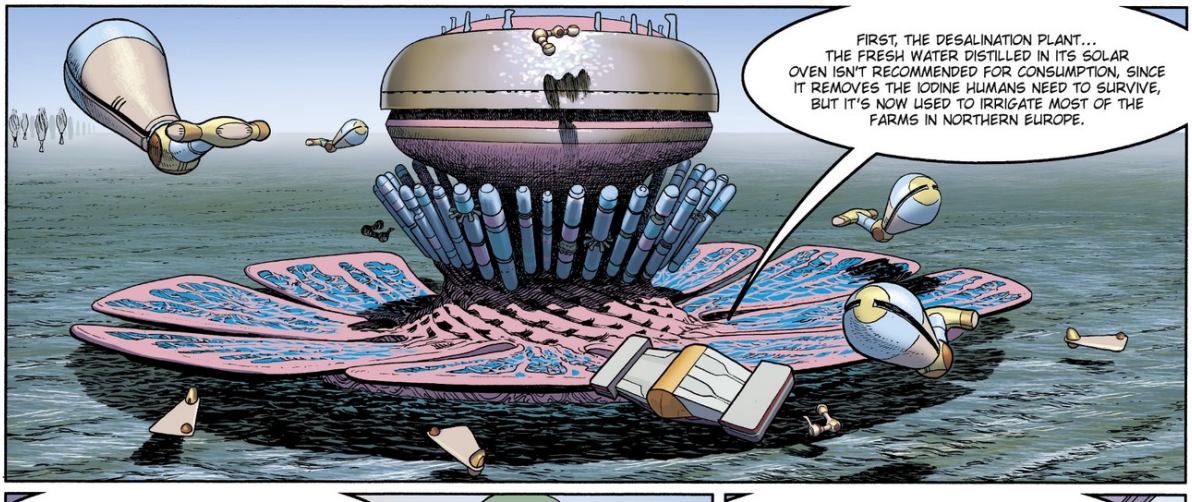
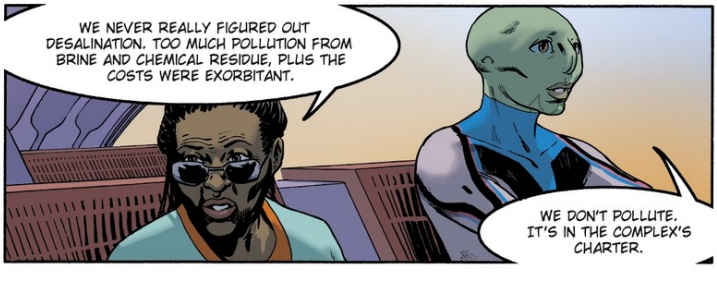
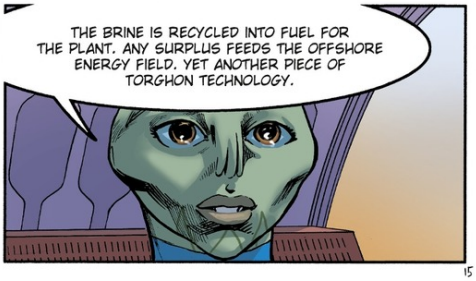


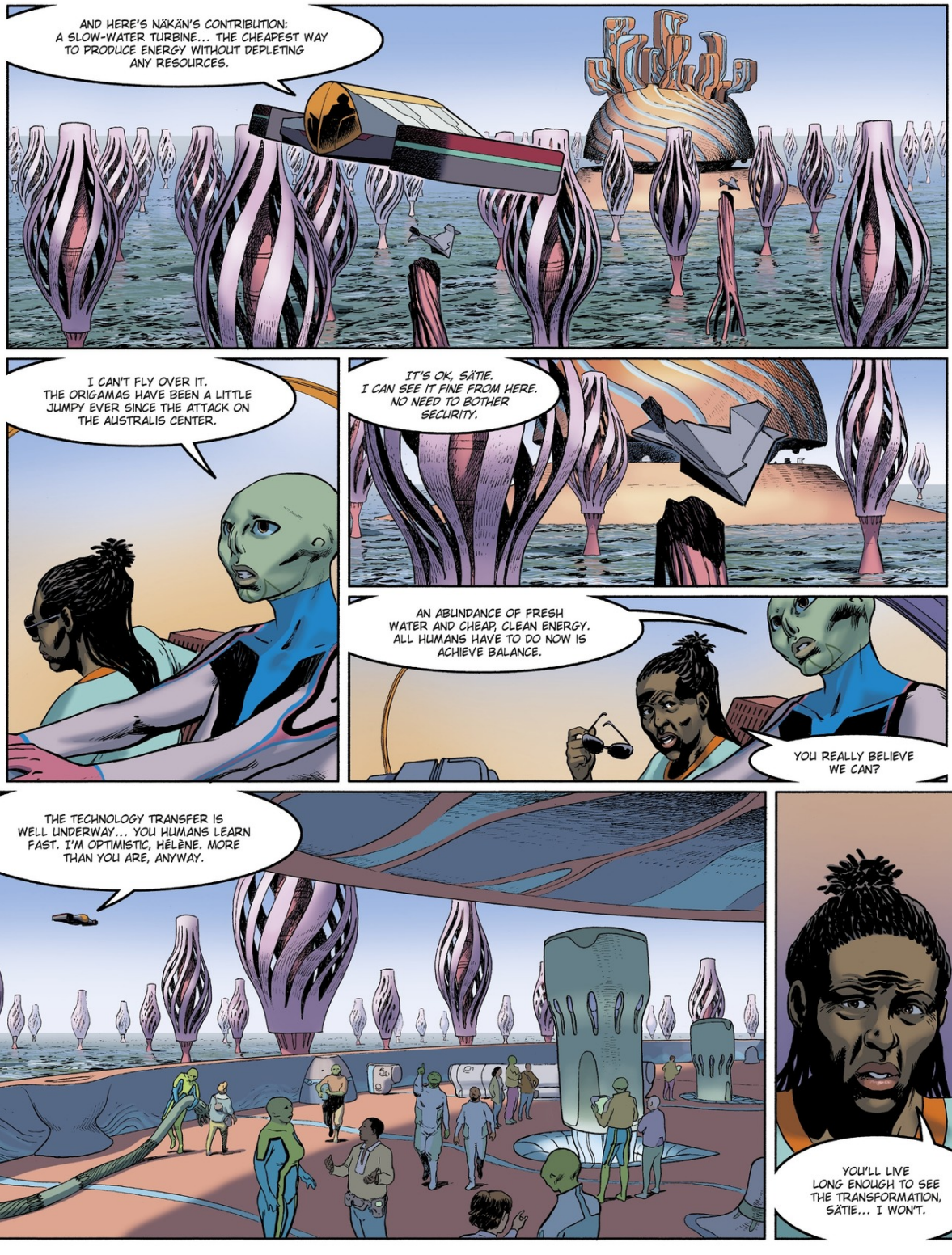

A CENTURY AGO, THOSE TRAINS RAN UNDER THE SEA... MY PARENTS USED TO TALK ABOUT IT...

ACTUALLY, WHILE WE'RE CROSSING THE CHANNEL, I CAN SHOW YOU TWO OF RENAISSANCE'S GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS.


FIRST, THE DESALINATION PLANT... THE FRESH WATER DISTILLED IN ITS SOLAR OVEN ISN'T RECOMMENDED FOR CONSUMPTION, SINCE IT REMOVES THE IODINE HUMANS NEED TO SURVIVE, BUT IT'S NOW USED TO IRRIGATE MOST OF THE FARMS IN NORTHERN EUROPE.


WE NEVER REALLY FIGURED OUT DESALINATION. TOO MUCH POLLUTION FROM BRINE AND CHEMICAL RESIDUE, PLUS THE COSTS WERE EXORBITANT.
WE DON'T POLLUTE. IT'S IN THE COMPLEX'S CHARTER.


THE BRINE IS RECYCLED INTO FUEL FOR THE PLANT. ANY SURPLUS FEEDS THE OFFSHORE ENERGY FIELD. YET ANOTHER PIECE OF TORGHON TECHNOLOGY.


AND HERE'S NÄKÄN'S CONTRIBUTION: A SLOW-WATER TURBINE... THE CHEAPEST WAY TO PRODUCE ENERGY WITHOUT DEPLETING ANY RESOURCES.
I CAN'T FLY OVER IT. THE ORIGAMAS HAVE BEEN A LITTLE JUMPY EVER SINCE THE ATTACK ON THE AUSTRALIS CENTER.
IT'S OK, SÄTIE. I CAN SEE IT FINE FROM HERE. NO NEED TO BOTHER SECURITY.
AN ABUNDANCE OF FRESH WATER AND CHEAP, CLEAN ENERGY. ALL HUMANS HAVE TO DO NOW IS ACHIEVE BALANCE.
YOU REALLY BELIEVE WE CAN?
THE TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER IS WELL UNDERWAY... YOU HUMANS LEARN FAST. I'M OPTIMISTIC, HÉLÈNE. MORE THAN YOU ARE, ANYWAY.
YOU'LL LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO SEE THE TRANSFORMATION, SÄTIE... I WON'T.

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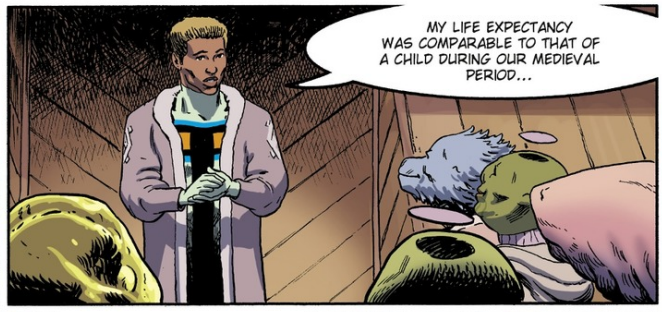
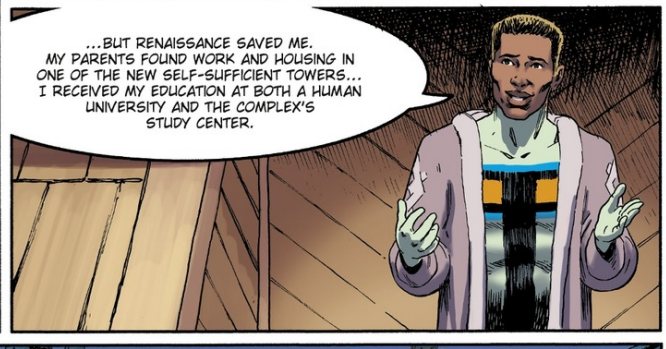
WHEN UNFILTERED, KÖBALT'S AIR IS RICH IN ELEMENTS THAT CAN HAVE A EUPHORIC EFFECT.
IT'S TEMPORARY AND COMPLETELY HARMLESS!
I HAVE SOME BAD NEWS, JENNIFER.
?!

WHAT'S GOING ON, JULES?
THEY'VE ANNOUNCED THE PARTNERS FOR TOMORROW'S EXPEDITION, AND IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'LL HAVE TO PUT UP WITH ME FOR THE WHOLE TRIP!
ARE WE REALLY GOING TO CLIMB THAT WATERFALL?
YOU KNOW IT'S AN IMPORTANT RITE OF PASSAGE ON KOBALT. THEY'RE GIVING US THE HONOR OF PARTICIPATING.
THE FROZEN WATERFALLS ONLY LAST FOR FIVE OF OUR EARTH YEARS. THEN THEY THAW OVER THE COURSE OF A FEW WEEKS... AND EVERYTHING BUILT ON THEM IS WASHED AWAY.
ICE IS DANGEROUS. IT FORCES US TO BE HUMBLE. EXACTLY WHAT WE HUMANS FAILED TO DO BY RUNNING OUR MACHINES IN OVERDRIVE.
I THINK OUR HOSTS ARE WAITING FOR MY SPEECH!
JULES AYA-CONTI, OUR MISSION CAPTAIN, WILL NOW SAY A FEW WORDS.
THAT'S HER.

WHEN RENAISSANCE CAME TO EARTH IN 2084, I WAS SIX YEARS OLD AND LIVING IN THE EIFFEL TOWER. PARIS WAS UNDERWATER, AND I WAS SICK WITH FEVER. "FEVER" IS WHAT WE HAD COME TO CALL THE MANY INFECTIOUS DISEASES THAT HAD BEEN RAVAGING THE HUMAN RACE FOR DECADES.


MY LIFE EXPECTANCY WAS COMPARABLE TO THAT OF A CHILD DURING OUR MEDIEVAL PERIOD...


...BUT RENAISSANCE SAVED ME. MY PARENTS FOUND WORK AND HOUSING IN ONE OF THE NEW SELF-SUFFICIENT TOWERS... I RECEIVED MY EDUCATION AT BOTH A HUMAN UNIVERSITY AND THE COMPLEX'S STUDY CENTER.

THERE, I LEARNED ABOUT THE BIOLOGY OF SEVERAL PLANETS, INCLUDING NÄKÄN AND KÖBALT.

I HAVE VERY FEW MEMORIES OF THE OLD WORLD. I AM A CHILD OF OUR UNION.

I HOPE TO LIVE UP TO THE GOODWILL THAT RENAISSANCE HAS SHOWN TO HUMANKIND AND EVERY OTHER SPECIES ON OUR WORLD.

THE DELIVERY'S TOMORROW NIGHT. BE ALONE. THE COURIER WILL FIND YOU.

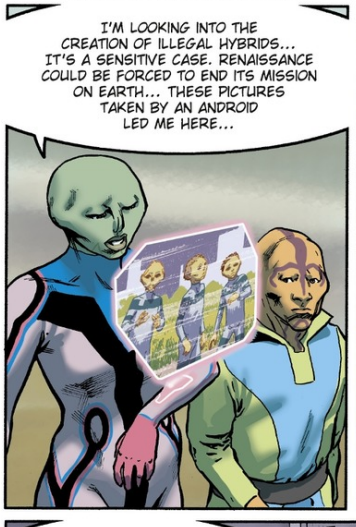
I'VE NEVER BEEN TO LONDON BEFORE. NOT EVEN WHEN I WAS A CHILD. IT ISN'T AS MODDED-OUT AS PARIS!
BRITAIN WAS VERY RELUCTANT TO ACCEPT RENAISSANCE'S HELP... LONDON WAS UNDERWATER, BUT ASIDE FROM MEDICAL AID, THEY DIDN'T ACCEPT ANYTHING FOR YEARS... NOT UNTIL THE RIOTS OF '96.
I REMEMBER. LONDON ALMOST BECAME AN ENCLAVE IN THE MIDDLE OF AN AUTONOMOUS ZONE.
YES, IN THE END THE ZONE WAS LIMITED TO THE LEEDS-MANCHESTER-SHEFFIELD TRIANGLE... OF COURSE, THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO LIVE THERE STILL DO SOME BUSINESS WITH LONDON, LIVERPOOL, AND GLASGOW... WHEN IT SUITS THEM.
THE CURTIS & DUPONT LAB WAS OVER THERE.
THERE'S A HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTION TO SHOW WHAT THE NEW BUILDING WILL LOOK LIKE.
I SAW!
WHAT ARE THOSE TWO DOING HERE, JÄSÖN?
I HAVE NO IDEA!
WANTED A CLEAN SLATE, I GUESS!

ANY THEORIES?
RENAISSANCE WAS USING CURTIS & DUPONT TO RUN HYBRIDIZATION EXPERIMENTS... THERE WAS A LEAK, SO THE COMPLEX DESTROYED THE EVIDENCE... IT'S UNLIKELY, BUT IT'S ALL I'VE GOT.
THAT STORE LOOKS OLD ENOUGH TO HAVE BEEN HERE 20 YEARS AGO.
INDIA FOOD MART
INDO-PAK GROCERIES
(414) 301-5169
नमस्ते महोदय
OPEN
NAMASTE, LADIES. I SPEAK ENGLISH BETTER THAN HINDI, YOU KNOW.
MY NAME IS DR. SÄTIE, I'M DOING A STUDY ON THE LIVING CONDITIONS IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD. WERE THERE ANY ISSUES WITH THE OLD LABORATORY ACROSS THE STREET?
CURTIS & DUPONT? THERE WAS THAT ROBOT UPRISING BACK IN '96... IT SPREAD THROUGH PRETTY MUCH ALL OF LONDON, BUT A RENAISSANCE TEAM CAME IN, AND THE LABORATORY NEVER RE-OPENED.
THEY BULLDOZED IT LAST MONTH. A HUMAN DEVELOPER GOT A GRANT FROM NÄKÄN TO TURN IT INTO A CULTURAL CENTER. THE BRITISH MUSEUM ISN'T FAR, AND IT'LL SHOW WORK BY ARTISTS FROM ALL OVER THE COMPLEX... SHOULD HELP REVITALIZE THE AREA.
TANDOORI SANDWICH WITH CHICKEN AND EXTRA CURRY, YOUR FAVORITE!
LET'S TAKE A SHORT WALK, DR. SÄTIE. YOUR ASSISTANT CAN TAG ALONG.
?!
?!

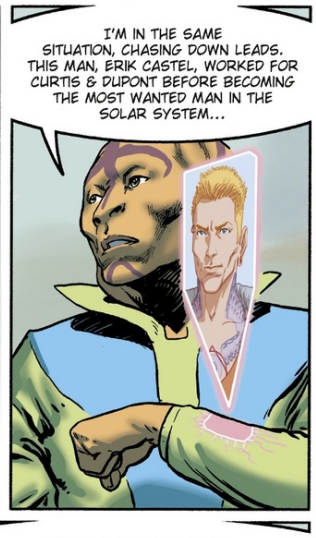
I'M INSPECTOR JÄSÖN. I'M LEADING THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE SUI JURIS TERRORIST ATTACK ON THE AUSTRALIS CENTER.
I WAS AT AUSTRALIS!

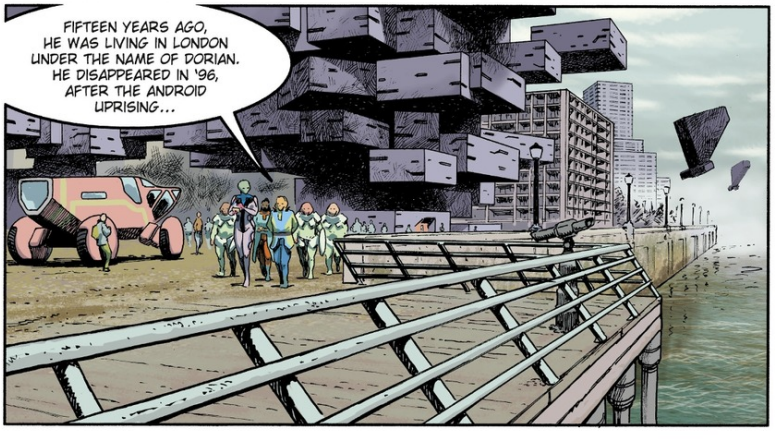
I KNOW. HENCE MY SURPRISE AT SEEING YOU HERE. WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THE OLD CURTIS & DUPONT HEADQUARTERS?

I OUTRANK YOU, SO TECHNICALLY YES.
I'M OBLIGATED TO TELL YOU, AREN'T I?

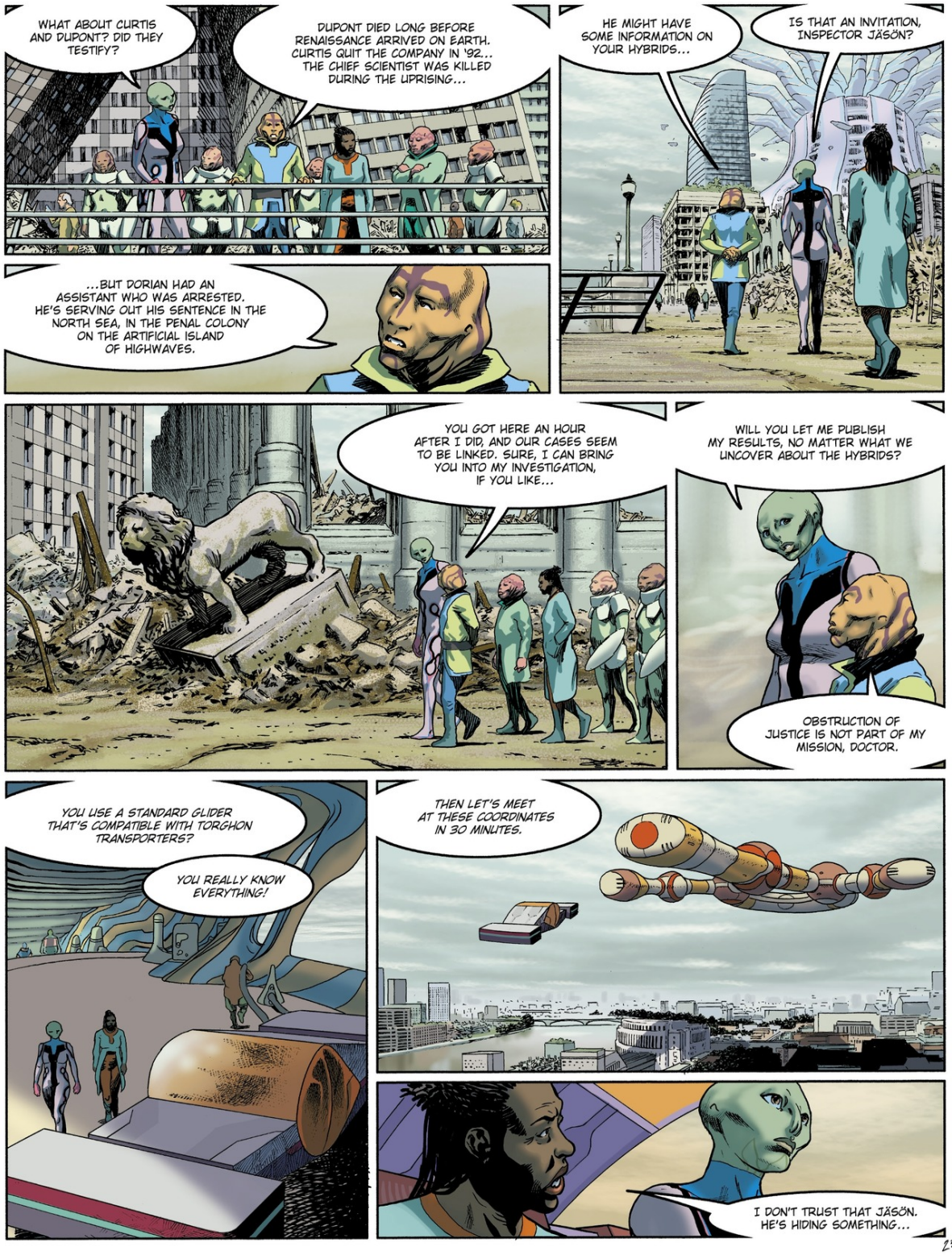

I'M LOOKING INTO THE CREATION OF ILLEGAL HYBRIDS... IT'S A SENSITIVE CASE. RENAISSANCE COULD BE FORCED TO END ITS MISSION ON EARTH... THESE PICTURES TAKEN BY AN ANDROID LED ME HERE...

TROUBLING...
IS THERE A CONNECTION TO THE SUI JURIS TERRORISTS? I KNOW, YOU DON'T HAVE TO DIVULGE THAT INFORMATION...


I'M IN THE SAME SITUATION, CHASING DOWN LEADS. THIS MAN, ERIK CASTEL, WORKED FOR CURTIS & DUPONT BEFORE BECOMING THE MOST WANTED MAN IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM...


FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, HE WAS LIVING IN LONDON UNDER THE NAME OF DORIAN. HE DISAPPEARED IN '96, AFTER THE ANDROID UPRISING...

HE'S THE ONE WHO GAVE THE EMANCIPATION VIRUS TO THE MACHINES... SOME LOCAL RESIDENTS HERE HAVE FORMALLY IDENTIFIED HIM, WHICH CONFIRMED OUR SUSPICIONS.


WHAT ABOUT CURTIS AND DUPONT? DID THEY TESTIFY?
DUPONT DIED LONG BEFORE RENAISSANCE ARRIVED ON EARTH. CURTIS QUIT THE COMPANY IN '92... THE CHIEF SCIENTIST WAS KILLED DURING THE UPRISING...
...BUT DORIAN HAD AN ASSISTANT WHO WAS ARRESTED. HE'S SERVING OUT HIS SENTENCE IN THE NORTH SEA, IN THE PENAL COLONY ON THE ARTIFICIAL ISLAND OF HIGHWAVES.
HE MIGHT HAVE SOME INFORMATION ON YOUR HYBRIDS...
IS THAT AN INVITATION, INSPECTOR JÄSÖN?
YOU GOT HERE AN HOUR AFTER I DID, AND OUR CASES SEEM TO BE LINKED. SURE, I CAN BRING YOU INTO MY INVESTIGATION, IF YOU LIKE...
WILL YOU LET ME PUBLISH MY RESULTS, NO MATTER WHAT WE UNCOVER ABOUT THE HYBRIDS?
OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE IS NOT PART OF MY MISSION, DOCTOR.
YOU USE A STANDARD GLIDER THAT'S COMPATIBLE WITH TORGHON TRANSPORTERS?
YOU REALLY KNOW EVERYTHING!
THEN LET'S MEET AT THESE COORDINATES IN 30 MINUTES.
I DON'T TRUST THAT JÄSÖN. HE'S HIDING SOMETHING...

0. MPH
0 MILES
EMPTY BATTERY
IT'S AT LEAST TWO HOURS' WALK FROM HERE, SWÄNN. WILL YOU BE OK?
WHAT CORTÉS SAID ABOUT KATE... DO YOU THINK IT'S POSSIBLE? I MEAN, DID YOU THINK THERE WAS A CHANCE SHE WAS A TERRORIST?

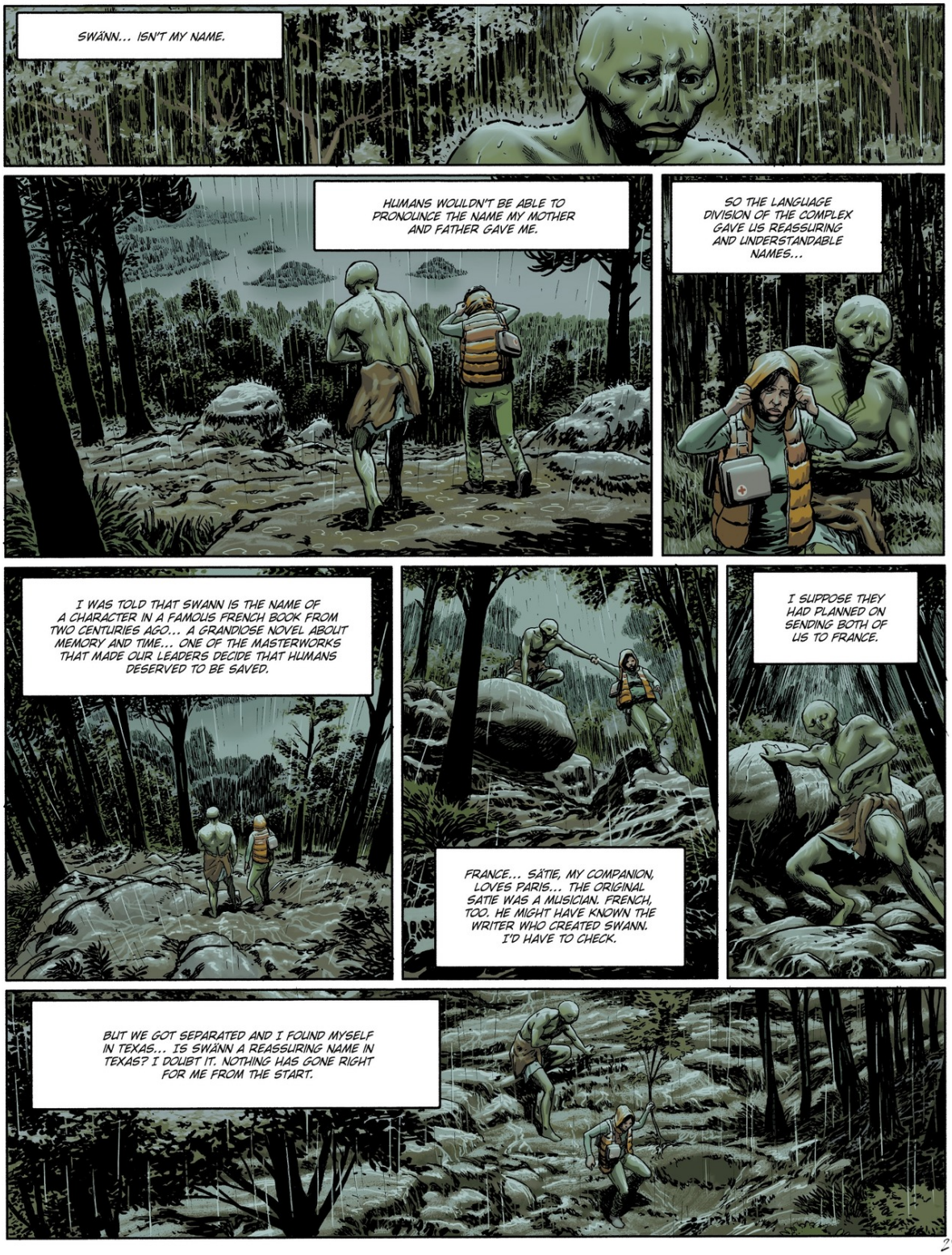
24

YOU DONE MUCH CLIMBING, JENNIFER?
SOME.
WHAT A GREAT IDEA TO HAVE THEM TAKE PART IN THIS RITUAL, PABLÖ!
I CAN'T KEEP UP WITH YOU!
I'LL WAIT!
?!

AH! MY FAVORITE DUO IS FINALLY BONDING! WHAT A SPLENDID DAY!
THE BOY WAS DOING PRETTY WELL, BUT THE GIRL IS EXCEPTIONAL!
I DON'T RECALL SEEING ANYTHING ABOUT MOUNTAINEERING IN HER FILE!
YOU CAN REMOVE YOUR HELMETS FOR A FEW MINUTES.

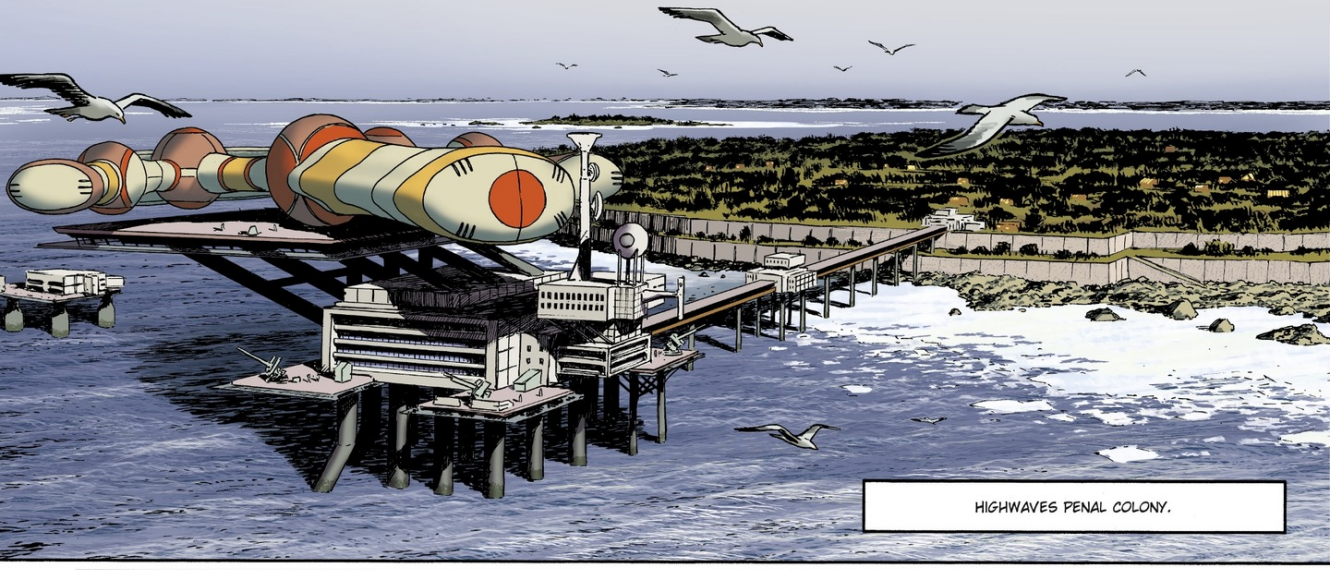
26.

YOU ALWAYS NEED THREE HOLDS. ONLY TAKE ONE HAND OR FOOT OFF AT A TIME!
JENNIFER, YOU'LL HAVE TO GIVE US YOUR PERSONAL TRAINER'S INFO.
I JUST LIKED CLIMBING TREES AS A KID!
READY TO GO, JULES?
IN FRONT OF YOU STANDS ASHTRÖ, MY HOME CITY AND THE CAPITAL OF THIS ICY REGION!


SWÄNN... ISN'T MY NAME.
HUMANS WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO PRONOUNCE THE NAME MY MOTHER AND FATHER GAVE ME.
SO THE LANGUAGE DIVISION OF THE COMPLEX GAVE US REASSURING AND UNDERSTANDABLE NAMES...
I WAS TOLD THAT SWANN IS THE NAME OF A CHARACTER IN A FAMOUS FRENCH BOOK FROM TWO CENTURIES AGO... A GRANDIOSE NOVEL ABOUT MEMORY AND TIME... ONE OF THE MASTERWORKS THAT MADE OUR LEADERS DECIDE THAT HUMANS DESERVED TO BE SAVED.
FRANCE... SÄTIE, MY COMPANION, LOVES PARIS... THE ORIGINAL SATIE WAS A MUSICIAN. FRENCH, TOO. HE MIGHT HAVE KNOWN THE WRITER WHO CREATED SWANN. I'D HAVE TO CHECK.
I SUPPOSE THEY HAD PLANNED ON SENDING BOTH OF US TO FRANCE.
BUT WE GOT SEPARATED AND I FOUND MYSELF IN TEXAS... IS SWÄNN A REASSURING NAME IN TEXAS? I DOUBT IT. NOTHING HAS GONE RIGHT FOR ME FROM THE START.

28

BUT WE ENDED UP BEING REUNITED. WE HAVE A MOBILE HOUSING UNIT, THE KIND ASSIGNED TO LUMINARIES LIKE SÄTIE... BUT I DON'T LIKE IT. IT'S JUST A SAD BOX FOR THE UPROOTED.
SÄTIE AND I DON'T AGREE ON MUCH ANYMORE.
TRUDGING THROUGH THIS MUD AND FREEZING RAIN, I'M REMINDED OF MY CHILDHOOD, WHEN I USED TO GO HUNTING WITH MY FATHER DURING THE LEAFY SEASON. A FLEETING MEMORY OF HAPPINESS...
LIZ IS BY FAR THE BEST HUMAN BEING THAT I'VE MET.
EVER SINCE THOSE MONSTERS RIPPED OUT MY IMPLANTS, I CAN'T SPEAK TO HER ANYMORE. BUT I CAN FEEL HER PAIN. HER WORRY. SHE HAS SUFFERED THE MOST HORRIBLE AND BANAL THING THAT CAN HAPPEN IN A WAR: THE LOSS OF OUR LOVED ONES.
AND HER ONLY SURVIVING DAUGHTER HAS PROBABLY TURNED OUT TO BE A MURDERER.
LIZ AND I BOTH KNOW THAT WHAT WE'RE ABOUT TO LEARN AT THIS ANDEAN ENCAMPMENT COULD DESTROY OUR FRIENDSHIP.
BUT NEITHER OF US INTENDS TO TURN BACK NOW.


HIGHWAVES PENAL COLONY.

NO WEAPONS OR SHARP OBJECTS? NO FOOD OR MONEY?
ALL IS IN ORDER, CAPTAIN!

INMATE FISHER IS WAITING FOR YOU. MY MEN WILL TAKE YOU TO HIM.

I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY STAFF FROM TORGHON OR NÄKÄN.
THAT'S INTENTIONAL. RENAISSANCE ONLY PROVIDES THE ENERGY FOR YOUR PRISONS.

HERE, DETAINEES LIVE AND WORK WITHOUT BARS OR SHACKLES. YOU SEE THIS AS PROGRESS FOR HUMANITY, WHICH IS TRUE, GIVEN THE STATE OF YOUR ORIGINAL PENITENTIARY SYSTEM. BUT YOU WILL HAVE TO ABOLISH PRISONS ALTOGETHER IF YOU WANT TO JOIN THE COMPLEX ONE DAY!

THERE'S NO CRIME ON NÄKÄN?
THERE ARE NO PRISONS. IT'S DIFFERENT.

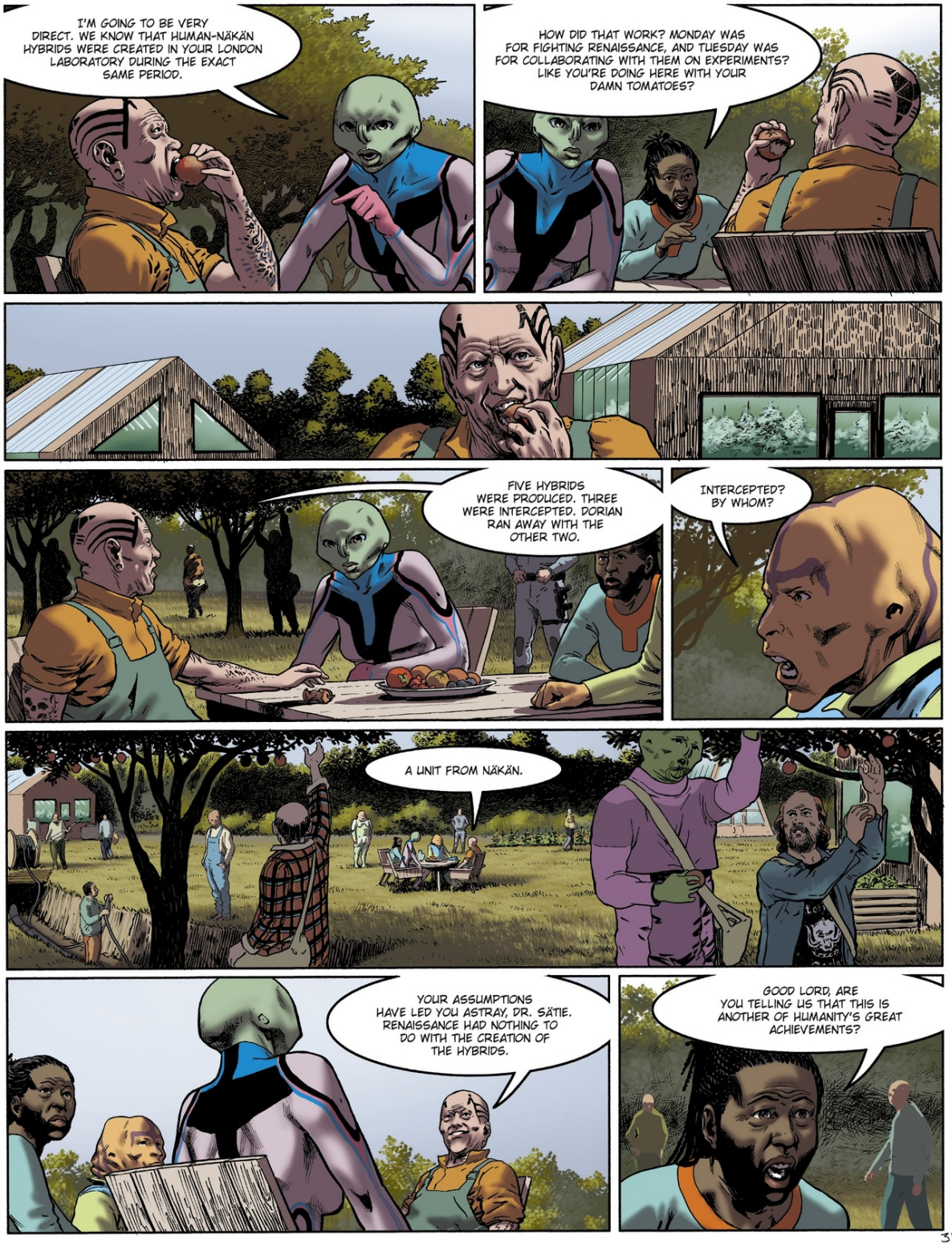
30

MAGNIFICENT, AREN'T THEY? WAIT UNTIL YOU TASTE THEM!
NICE WORK, MR. FISHER.
I FORGOT, THERE'S SOME RENAISSANCE OFFICIALS HERE TO VISIT ME. I HAVE TO LEAVE YOU.
I STILL HAVE SOME SAMPLING TO DO, DON'T WORRY!
WELCOME TO OUR HUMBLE GARDEN, INSPECTOR JÄSÖN!
I WASN'T AWARE THERE WERE NÄKÄN BOTANISTS ON THE ISLAND!
PROFESSOR ARCIMBÖLDÖ AND I ARE GRAFTING TERRESTRIAL VEGETABLES WITH VARIETIES FROM NÄKÄN THAT ARE NATURALLY RESISTANT TO PESTS AND PARASITES LIKE POWDERY MILDEW.
YET ANOTHER EXPERIMENT IN HYBRIDIZATION.
I WAS INFORMED OF INSPECTOR JÄSÖN'S VISIT, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, LADIES.
I'M DR. SÄTIE AND THIS IS HÉLÈNE, MY ASSISTANT. WE'LL TALK ONCE INSPECTOR JÄSÖN HAS FINISHED.
YOU SEEM STRESSED, DOCTOR. I HOPE I'M NOT THE REASON FOR THAT.

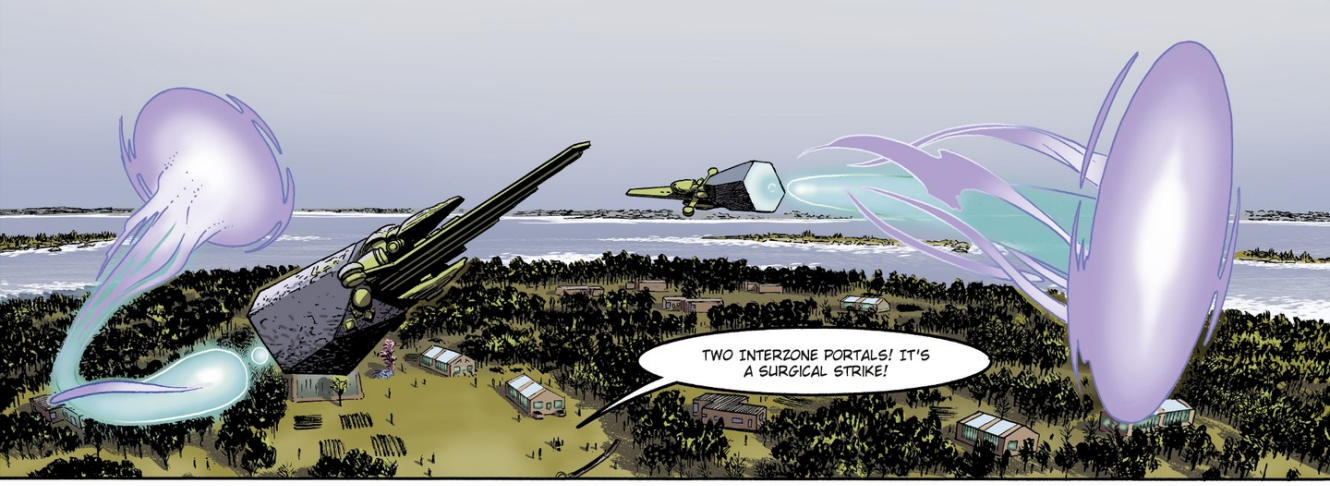
31

A SCIENTIST NAMED DORIAN. YOU WERE HIS ASSISTANT, WEREN'T YOU?
DORIAN. YEP, THAT'S WHAT HE TOLD US TO CALL HIM BACK THEN.
ALL THE ARCHIVES HAVE BEEN DESTROYED, BUT WE KNOW THAT HE'S NOW USING THE NAME ERIK CASTEL. HAVE YOU HAD ANY CONTACT WITH HIM RECENTLY?
NO. I HELPED HIM DEVELOP AN EMANCIPATION VIRUS FOR THE ANDROIDS. WE WERE ACTIVISTS OPPOSED TO RENAISSANCE TAKING CONTROL OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON EARTH. HE GOT AWAY AND I WAS ARRESTED.
I OPENLY ADMITTED ALL THAT DURING MY TRIAL. I HOPE TO LEAVE THE ISLAND IN TWO YEARS. I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANY MORE ABOUT DORIAN.
WERE YOU PART OF A GLOBAL TERRORIST NETWORK?
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT SUI JURIS. THE NAME DIDN'T EXIST BACK THEN, BUT THE GROUP DID.
THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR STORY THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE, MR. FISHER.

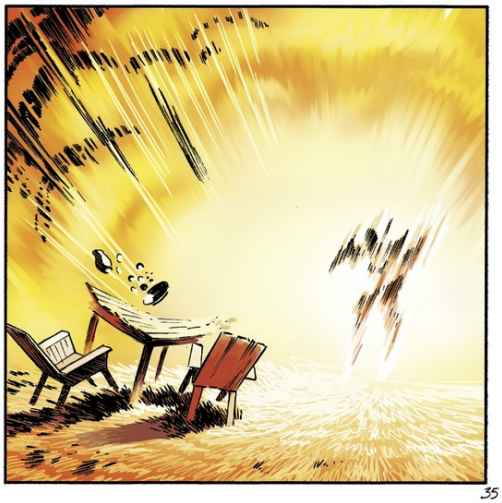
32


I'M GOING TO BE VERY DIRECT. WE KNOW THAT HUMAN-NÄKÄN HYBRIDS WERE CREATED IN YOUR LONDON LABORATORY DURING THE EXACT SAME PERIOD.
HOW DID THAT WORK? MONDAY WAS FOR FIGHTING RENAISSANCE, AND TUESDAY WAS FOR COLLABORATING WITH THEM ON EXPERIMENTS? LIKE YOU'RE DOING HERE WITH YOUR DAMN TOMATOES?
FIVE HYBRIDS WERE PRODUCED. THREE WERE INTERCEPTED. DORIAN RAN AWAY WITH THE OTHER TWO.
INTERCEPTED? BY WHOM?
A UNIT FROM NÄKÄN.
YOUR ASSUMPTIONS HAVE LED YOU ASTRAY, DR. SÄTIE. RENAISSANCE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE CREATION OF THE HYBRIDS.
GOOD LORD, ARE YOU TELLING US THAT THIS IS ANOTHER OF HUMANITY'S GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS?

NÄKÄN'S RAID ON THE CURTIS & DUPONT HEADQUARTERS WASN'T ARCHIVED. CAN YOU PROVE WHAT YOU'RE CLAIMING?
ALAS, NO. OR YOU CAN BE SURE I WOULD'VE USED IT TO NEGOTIATE.
WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU KNOW?
GETTING AHOLD OF NÄKÄN DNA WAS A BREEZE. WE GOT IT FROM OUR CLIENTS.
CLIENTS?
YES, BUT AN EMANCIPATED ANDROID TOOK PHOTOS OF THE CREATURES AND EXPOSED US.
WHO LED THE PROJECT? WAS IT CURTIS HIMSELF?
YES.
AND YOU HELPED WITH THE EXPERIMENTS?
OBVIOUSLY. I WAS HIS ASSISTANT.
THAT'S CRAZY! WHAT, WERE YOU EVERYBODY'S ASSISTANT OVER THERE?
MY DEAR LADY, I THINK YOU STILL HAVEN'T UNDERSTOOD!
LOOK OUT!
YOU SENTENCED ME TO DEATH, COMING HERE.


TWO INTERZONE PORTALS! IT'S A SURGICAL STRIKE!

TAKE COVER!



I'VE NEVER SEEN THAT KIND OF FIGHTER!
ATTACK BY AN UNKNOWN CIVILIZATION THAT CAN QUANTUM LEAP!
LET'S COMBINE OUR SHIELDS!
GOODBYE, FISHER.
LIES!
E.T. GO HOME
FAKE
SUI JURIS
TRUST NO 1
ACAB

WE NEED EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ON THE GROUND RIGHT NOW! WE CAN'T TRANSPORT THE INJURED!
37

ASHTRÖ, KÖBALT.

WHAT DO THINK OF THIS SANTHÄL BRANDY? BETTER THAN YOUR RUN-OF-THE-MILL RUM, RIGHT?

IT'S DELICIOUS, PABLÖ, BUT I THINK I'VE HAD ENOUGH!

COME ON, JULES, YOU'LL HAVE TIME TO SLEEP IN TOMORROW MORNING! WE DON'T START WORK UNTIL AFTER LUNCH. AT LEAST HAVE A TASTE OF KÖBALT WOOD LIQUOR!

ANYONE SEEN JENNIFER?

SHE WANTED TO EXPLORE THE CITY ALONE. YOU KNOW HOW SHE IS!

HEY!

SNOWSHOES AND A DEFENSE BATON! GOING OUT?
DAY BREAKS IN TWO HOURS... I WANT TO SEE THE OLD GROWTH FOREST AT DAWN. TOMORROW MORNING IS THE ONLY FREE TIME WE'LL GET ON KÖBALT TO EXPLORE.
INTERESTED?
DID... DID YOU TELL PABLÖ?
LISTEN, MAN, WE'RE NOT IN COLLEGE ANYMORE. WE WERE TOLD WE WERE FREE TO MOVE AROUND AS WE PLEASE! WE'D BE BACK IN TIME FOR WORK. THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS.
YOU HAVE A ROUTE?
YES. IT'S ABOUT THREE HOURS' HIKE. AND I KNOW WHERE TO FIND WATER.
CAN YOU GIVE ME FIFTEEN MINUTES TO PACK MY BAG?

40

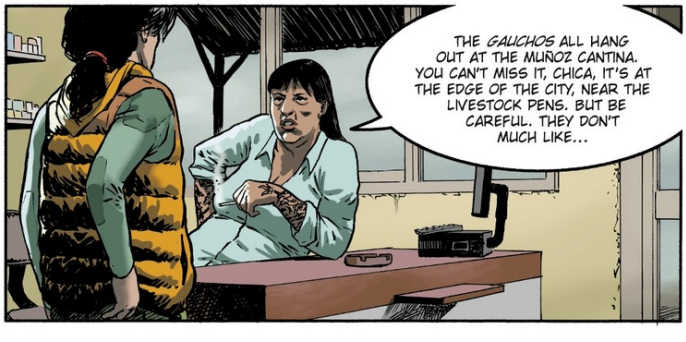
I'VE TOLD YOU ALREADY. MY DAUGHTER'S NAME IS HAMILTON. KATE HAMILTON. SHE'S ENROLLED AT BERKELEY AND I'M TRYING TO CONTACT HER. SHE WON'T ANSWER MY MESSAGES.

SHE'S NOT IN CALIFORNIA. SHE LIED TO ME!

I'M SORRY, MA'AM, BUT THERE'S NO STUDENT OR PROFESSOR OF THAT NAME IN THE CIVILIZATION STUDIES DEPARTMENT. YOU SHOULD LOOK HER UP ON THE OLD FEDERAL NETWORK. IT'S USUALLY POSSIBLE TO CONNECT ON MONDAY MORNINGS.

WE HAVE TO FIND HER. ASK HER FRIENDS?

CLOUD
KATE
THE PEREZ BROTHERS, TWO *GALICHOS*. THEY'RE FRIENDS OF THIS YOUNG WOMAN. DO YOU KNOW THEM?


THE *GALICHOS* ALL HANG OUT AT THE MUÑOZ CANTINA. YOU CAN'T MISS IT, CHICA, IT'S AT THE EDGE OF THE CITY, NEAR THE LIVESTOCK PENS. BUT BE CAREFUL. THEY DON'T MUCH LIKE...

...WELL, GUYS LIKE HIM.

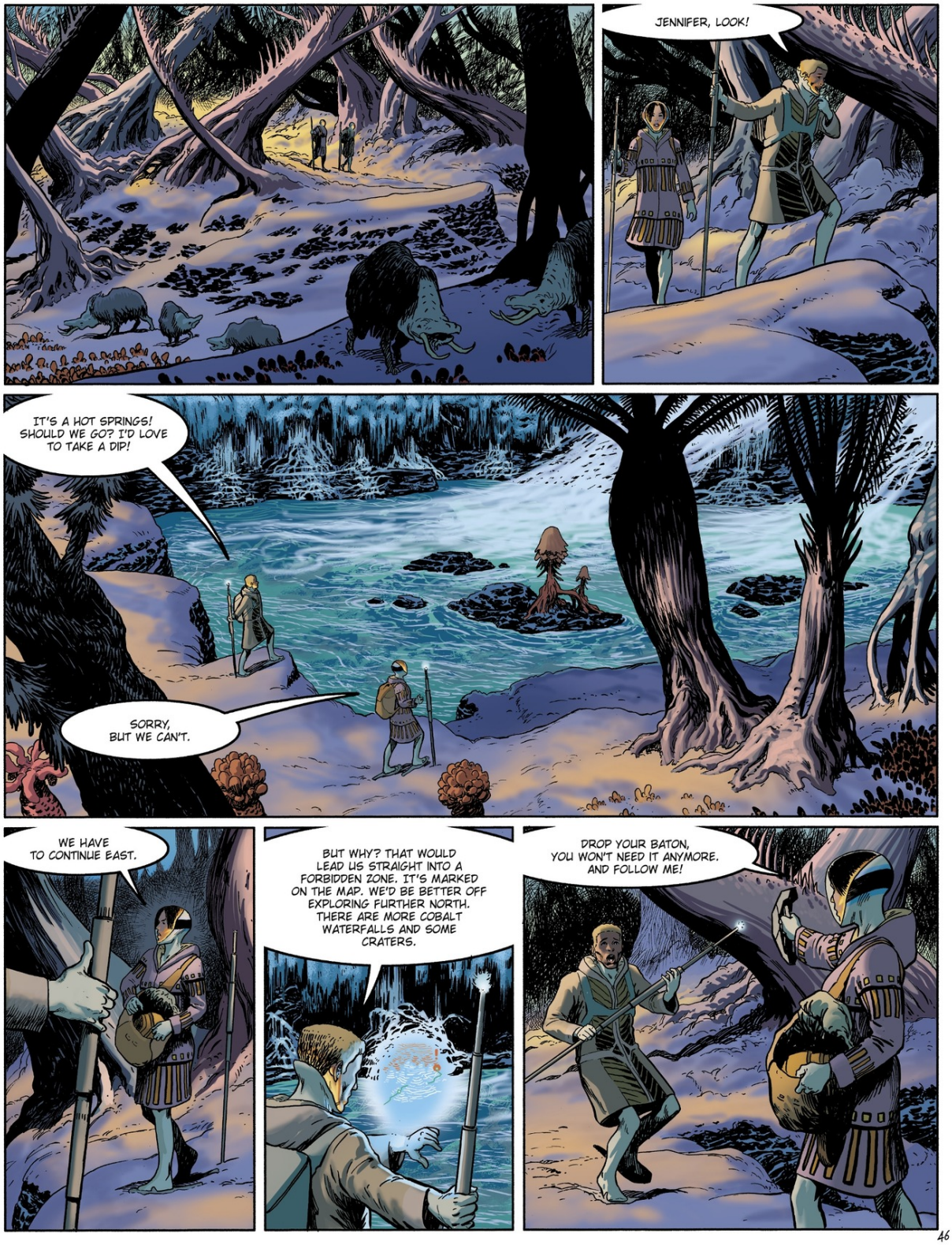
41

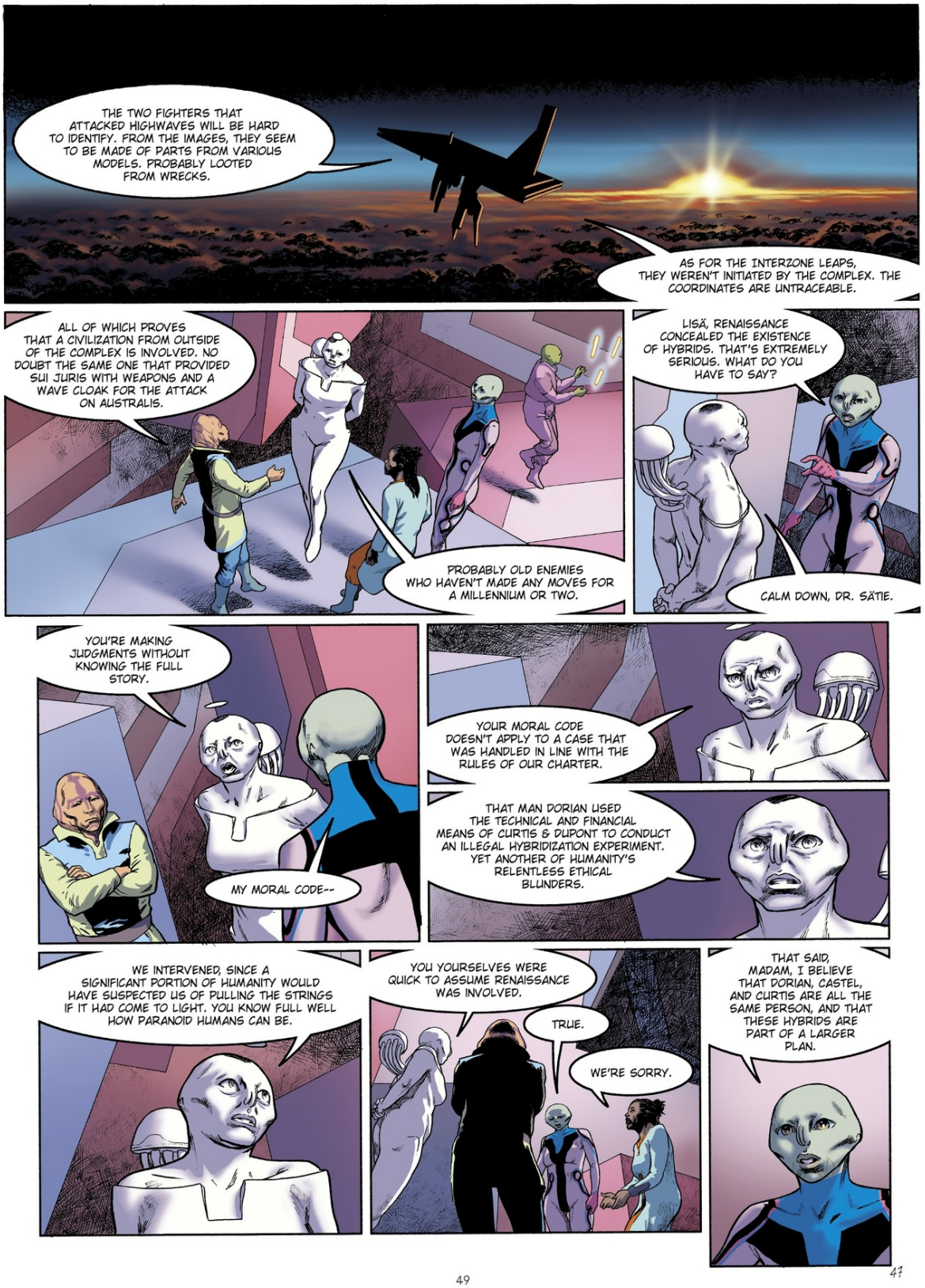
SEÑORA HAMILTON?
PEDRO! MIGUEL! WHERE'S KATE?
DIDN'T SHE TELL YOU? SHE WENT TO SOME GRINGO CONFERENCE!
LIAR! WHERE'S MY DAUGHTER?
CALM DOWN, SEÑORA!
AROUND HERE, WE DON'T CARE FOR WOMEN WHO HANG OUT WITH FROGS. WHY DON'T YOU ASK YOUR FRIENDS FROM NÄKÄN FOR HELP!
I ALREADY HAVE!

B4
THAT'S ENOUGH!

MY BOYS DON'T KNOW ANYTHING, SEÑORA. I, HOWEVER, DO HAVE SOME INFORMATION.
AND I SUPPOSE YOU'RE GOING TO TELL US THE PRICE?
IT ISN'T EASY RAISING ANIMALS IN THE AUTONOMOUS ZONE. BUT IT'S THE LIFE WE CHOSE.
I WANT A GUARANTEE THAT RENAISSANCE WON'T INTERFERE IN THE CAMP. IN RETURN, YOU HAVE MY WORD THAT WE'LL LIE ABOUT WHY YOU CAME HERE.
RENAISSANCE WILL HAVE TO SEND A TEAM TO RESCUE US.
I UNDERSTAND. BUT OUTSIDE THE CAMP. NO ARRESTS. NO OCCUPATION.
OK.
YOU KNOW, MY PEDRO IS HEAD OVER HEELS FOR YOUR KATE. AND IT MAKES HIM VERY UNHAPPY. SO THE NIGHT SHE PACKED HER BAGS, I HAD A TALK WITH HER.
SHE WAS VERY FRANK WITH ME. SHE SAID SHE HAD TO GO TO DON CURTIS'S HACIENDA FOR AN IMPORTANT APPOINTMENT, AND THAT SHE WOULD THEN LEAVE ON A LONG JOURNEY FROM WHICH SHE'D PROBABLY NEVER RETURN.
DON CURTIS'S HACIENDA?
UP THERE, ON THE ALTIPLANO. DO YOU HAVE A MAP OF THE AREA?

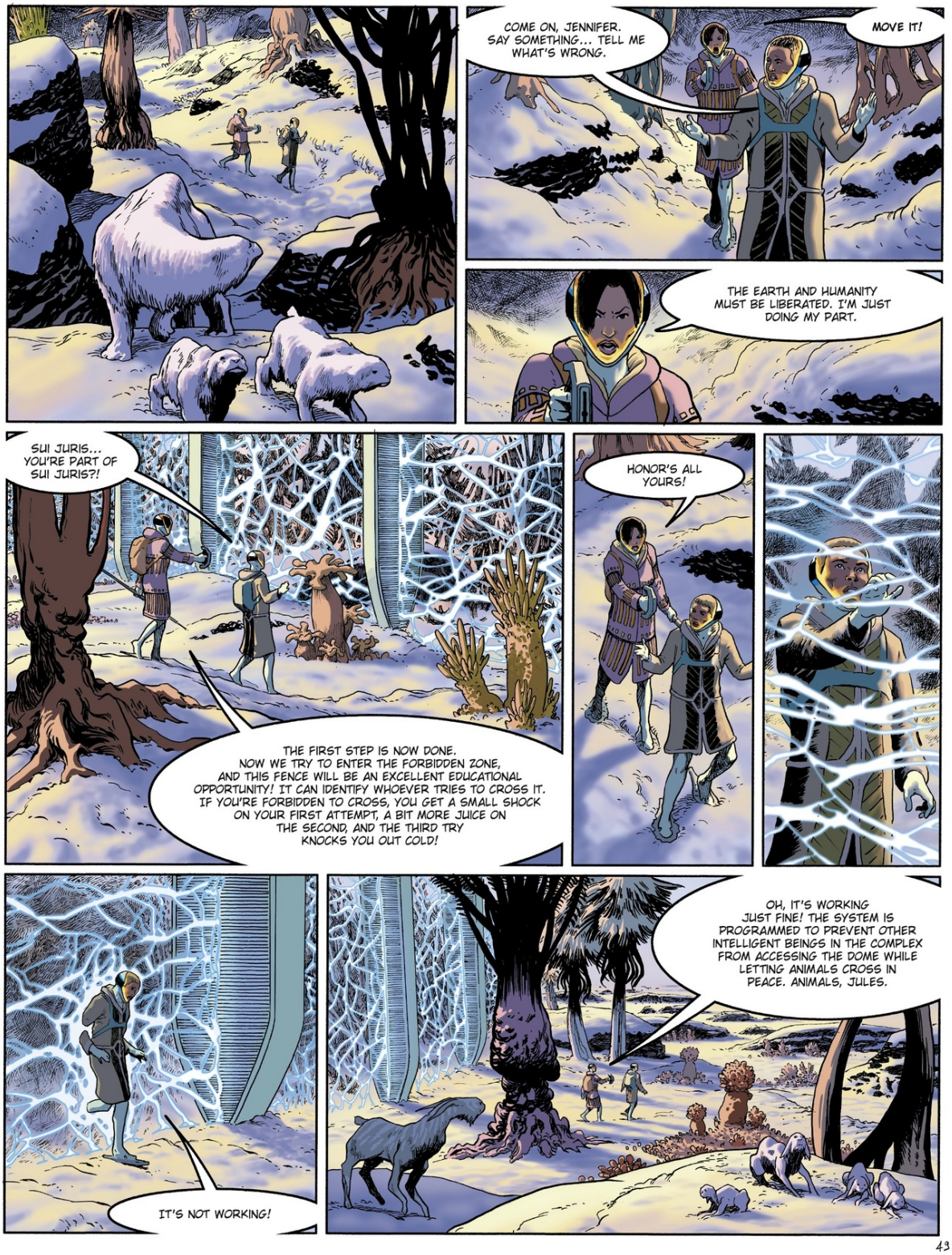
JULES, PUT AWAY YOUR BATON. THESE NOMADS AREN'T WILD ANIMALS!
AMAZING! THEY HAD NEVER SEEN HUMANS BEFORE, AND YET THEY SHOWED NO MISTRUST, NO APPREHENSION.
MAYBE BECAUSE THEY COULD KILL US WITH ONE SWIPE OF THEIR CLAWS!
45


JENNIFER, LOOK!
IT'S A HOT SPRINGS! SHOULD WE GO? I'D LOVE TO TAKE A DIP!
SORRY, BUT WE CAN'T.
WE HAVE TO CONTINUE EAST.
BUT WHY? THAT WOULD LEAD US STRAIGHT INTO A FORBIDDEN ZONE. IT'S MARKED ON THE MAP. WE'D BE BETTER OFF EXPLORING FURTHER NORTH. THERE ARE MORE COBALT WATERFALLS AND SOME CRATERS.
DROP YOUR BATON, YOU WON'T NEED IT ANYMORE. AND FOLLOW ME!


THE TWO FIGHTERS THAT ATTACKED HIGHWAVES WILL BE HARD TO IDENTIFY. FROM THE IMAGES, THEY SEEM TO BE MADE OF PARTS FROM VARIOUS MODELS. PROBABLY LOOTED FROM WRECKS.
AS FOR THE INTERZONE LEAPS, THEY WEREN'T INITIATED BY THE COMPLEX. THE COORDINATES ARE UNTRACEABLE.
ALL OF WHICH PROVES THAT A CIVILIZATION FROM OUTSIDE OF THE COMPLEX IS INVOLVED. NO DOUBT THE SAME ONE THAT PROVIDED SUI JURIS WITH WEAPONS AND A WAVE CLOAK FOR THE ATTACK ON AUSTRALIS.
PROBABLY OLD ENEMIES WHO HAVEN'T MADE ANY MOVES FOR A MILLENNIUM OR TWO.
LISÄ, RENAISSANCE CONCEALED THE EXISTENCE OF HYBRIDS. THAT'S EXTREMELY SERIOUS. WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY?
CALM DOWN, DR. SÄTIE.
YOU'RE MAKING JUDGMENTS WITHOUT KNOWING THE FULL STORY.
MY MORAL CODE--
YOUR MORAL CODE DOESN'T APPLY TO A CASE THAT WAS HANDLED IN LINE WITH THE RULES OF OUR CHARTER.
THAT MAN DORIAN USED THE TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL MEANS OF CURTIS & DUPONT TO CONDUCT AN ILLEGAL HYBRIDIZATION EXPERIMENT. YET ANOTHER OF HUMANITY'S RELENTLESS ETHICAL BLUNDERS.
WE INTERVENED, SINCE A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF HUMANITY WOULD HAVE SUSPECTED US OF PULLING THE STRINGS IF IT HAD COME TO LIGHT. YOU KNOW FULL WELL HOW PARANOID HUMANS CAN BE.
YOU YOURSELVES WERE QUICK TO ASSUME RENAISSANCE WAS INVOLVED.
TRUE.
WE'RE SORRY.
THAT SAID, MADAM, I BELIEVE THAT DORIAN, CASTEL, AND CURTIS ARE ALL THE SAME PERSON, AND THAT THESE HYBRIDS ARE PART OF A LARGER PLAN.

I'M WORRIED. VERY WORRIED!
LAST NIGHT, JULES LEFT ME A SHORT MESSAGE: "HIKING IN THE FOREST WITH JENNIFER, WILL BE BACK BEFORE NOON."
THEIR LAST RECORDED LOCATION WAS ON THE NORTHERN TRAIL.
MAYBE THEY RAN INTO SOME WILD ANIMAL. ARE THE KODIAKS MIGRATING RIGHT NOW?
YES, PABLÖ.
SEND WORD TO ALL THE NOMADIC FAMILIES WHO LIVE BETWEEN HERE AND THE BORDER. THEY'LL HAVE NOTICED TWO HUMANS!
PABLÖ, IS THERE A PROBLEM WITH JULES AND JENNIFER?
THEY'RE NOT IN THEIR ROOMS!
JUST A LITTLE HICCUP. GET READY FOR THE SYMPOSIUM AND START WITHOUT US, IF NECESSARY.
A HUNTING BUGGY! THE PERFECT VEHICLE FOR FOLLOWING THEIR TRACKS.

4-8


COME ON, JENNIFER. SAY SOMETHING... TELL ME WHAT'S WRONG.
MOVE IT!
THE EARTH AND HUMANITY MUST BE LIBERATED. I'M JUST DOING MY PART.
SUI JURIS... YOU'RE PART OF SUI JURIS?!
THE FIRST STEP IS NOW DONE. NOW WE TRY TO ENTER THE FORBIDDEN ZONE, AND THIS FENCE WILL BE AN EXCELLENT EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY! IT CAN IDENTIFY WHOEVER TRIES TO CROSS IT. IF YOU'RE FORBIDDEN TO CROSS, YOU GET A SMALL SHOCK ON YOUR FIRST ATTEMPT, A BIT MORE JUICE ON THE SECOND, AND THE THIRD TRY KNOCKS YOU OUT COLD!
HONOR'S ALL YOURS!
IT'S NOT WORKING!
OH, IT'S WORKING JUST FINE! THE SYSTEM IS PROGRAMMED TO PREVENT OTHER INTELLIGENT BEINGS IN THE COMPLEX FROM ACCESSING THE DOME WHILE LETTING ANIMALS CROSS IN PEACE. ANIMALS, JULES.

DR. SÄTIE, WE'VE FOUND SWÄNN. HE'S COMMUNICATING WITH US USING OLD EARTHLING RADIO EQUIPMENT. IT'S PRETTY CONFUSING... HE'S ASKED FOR SUPPORT FROM A SMALL UNIT...

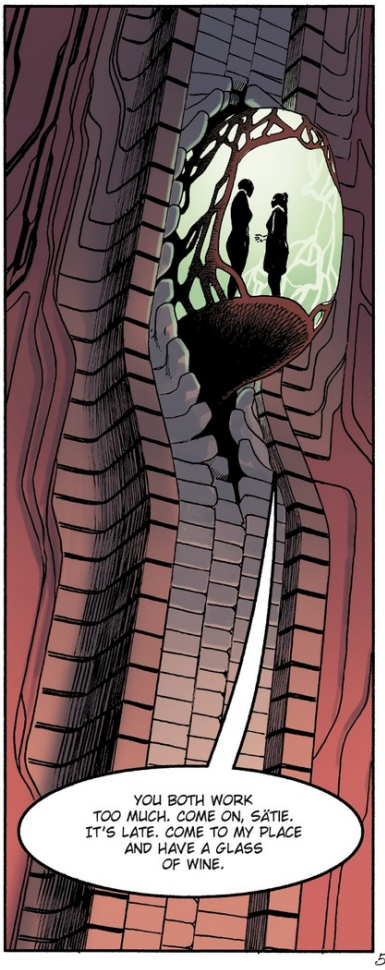
SWÄNN IS IN THE CHILEAN ANDES WITH LIZ HAMILTON. THEY'RE LOOKING FOR HER DAUGHTER, KATE... A SUSPECTED MEMBER OF SUI JURIS.

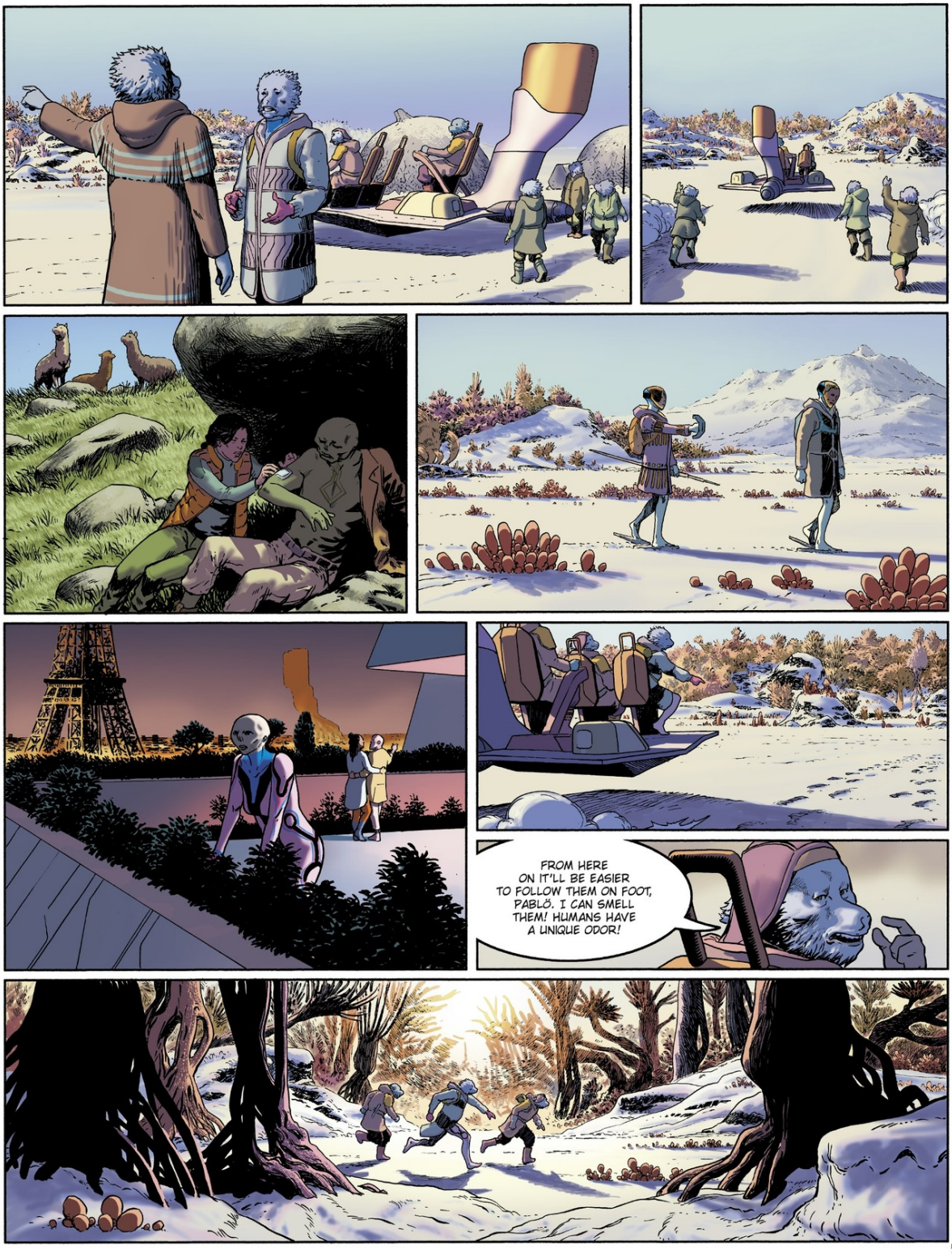
DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS PERSON? WE DON'T HAVE AN ADDRESS FOR HER IN OUR DATABASE.

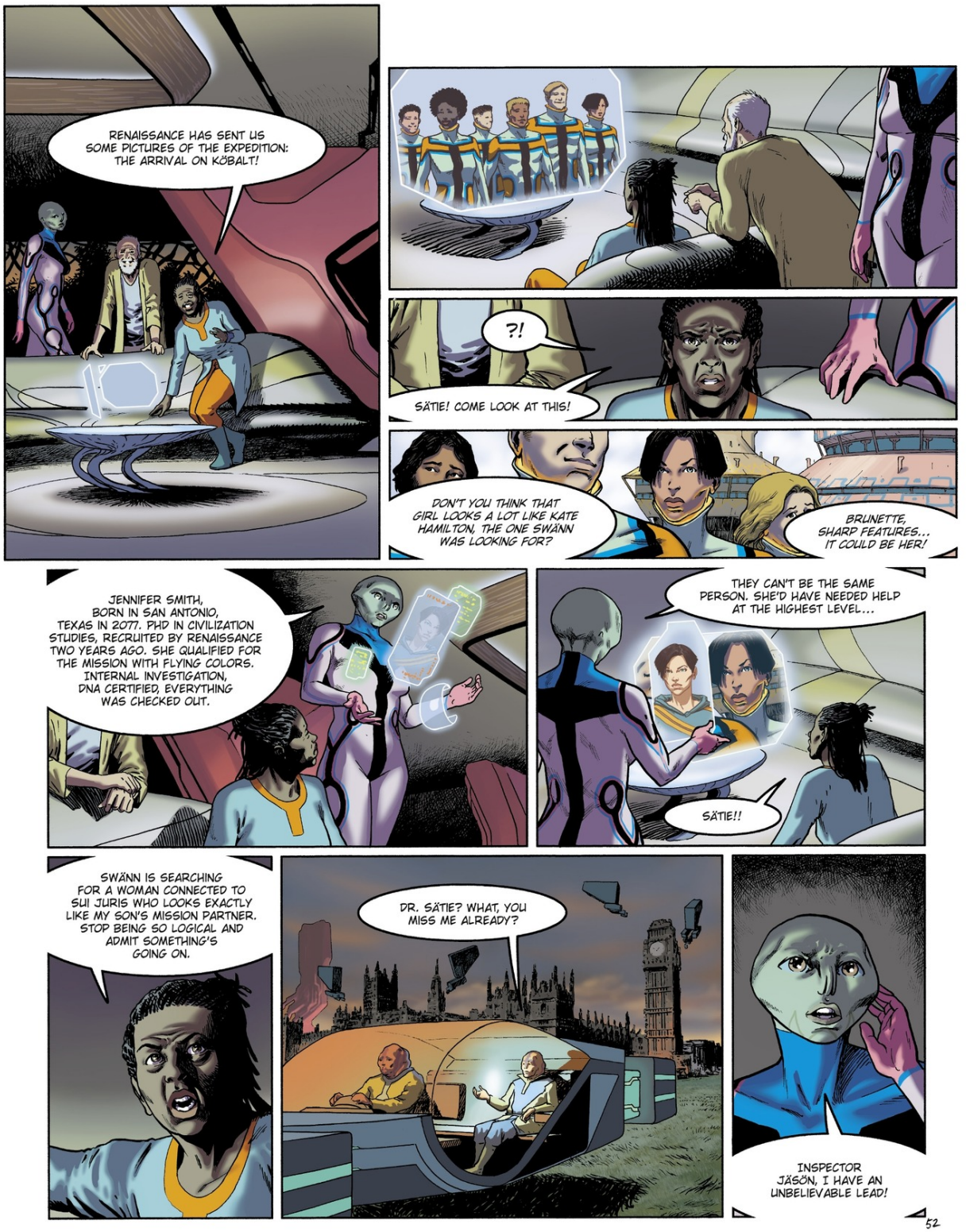
SORRY, LUNAR BASE. I HAVE NO INFORMATION. I ONLY MET HER ONCE, IN ARGENTINA.

IS SWÄNN OK?
HE SAYS HE WAS INJURED, BUT NOT SERIOUSLY. THANK YOU, DOCTOR.

YOU OK?
YES... I MEAN, I THINK SO. I... I'M REALIZING THAT I HAVEN'T WRITTEN TO SWÄNN IN THE LAST TWO DAYS.


YOU BOTH WORK TOO MUCH. COME ON, SÄTIE. IT'S LATE. COME TO MY PLACE AND HAVE A GLASS OF WINE.


FROM HERE ON IT'LL BE EASIER TO FOLLOW THEM ON FOOT, PABLÖ. I CAN SMELL THEM! HUMANS HAVE A UNIQUE ODOR!


RENAISSANCE HAS SENT US SOME PICTURES OF THE EXPEDITION: THE ARRIVAL ON KÖBALT!
?!
SÄTIE! COME LOOK AT THIS!
DON'T YOU THINK THAT GIRL LOOKS A LOT LIKE KATE HAMILTON, THE ONE SWÄNN WAS LOOKING FOR?
BRUNETTE, SHARP FEATURES... IT COULD BE HER!
JENNIFER SMITH, BORN IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS IN 2077. PHD IN CIVILIZATION STUDIES, RECRUITED BY RENAISSANCE TWO YEARS AGO. SHE QUALIFIED FOR THE MISSION WITH FLYING COLORS. INTERNAL INVESTIGATION, DNA CERTIFIED, EVERYTHING WAS CHECKED OUT.
THEY CAN'T BE THE SAME PERSON. SHE'D HAVE NEEDED HELP AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL...
SÄTIE!!
SWÄNN IS SEARCHING FOR A WOMAN CONNECTED TO SUI JURIS WHO LOOKS EXACTLY LIKE MY SON'S MISSION PARTNER. STOP BEING SO LOGICAL AND ADMIT SOMETHING'S GOING ON.
DR. SÄTIE? WHAT, YOU MISS ME ALREADY?
INSPECTOR JÄSÖN, I HAVE AN UNBELIEVABLE LEAD!

52

THE INTERZONE LEAP GENERATOR...
YOU REALLY KNOW THE COMPLEX AND ITS TECHNOLOGY, DON'T YOU?
THE INTERZONE TOOK MY FATHER AND MY TWO SISTERS.
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU SAYING?
THE TRUTH.

53

WHAT ARE THEY, SWÄNN?
HYBRIDS. POSSIBLY HUMAN-NÄKÄN.
GRAVE DANGER!
54
DUVAL . SIEN . BLANCHARD
TO BE CONTINUED...

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